

PROLOGUE.

The struggles of the brave Rajputs, among whom the Rathores easily take the palm, for maintaining their independence during the medieval ages, often risking and sacrificing all that was dear to them for their religion and honour; and, inspite of alluring temptations, sturdily defending to death their rights and liberty constitute a picture which it is difficult to contemplate without intense emotion. The history of Bikaner abounds in heroic personalities of such exalted character.

2. The study, which has resulted in the production of this book, was originally undertaken as a research into the ancient history of Bikaner. Raja Rai Singhji as one of the greatest Rulers that have, through ages, sat on its throne naturally rivetted attention. As the data was collected and significant events were marshalled in proper order, the result presented the variegated picture of an outstanding personality towering in grandeur and rich in elements that make for leadership in times of peace as well as war.

3. Raja Rai Singhji has been described by more than one independent European historian as

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RAJA RAI SINGHJI.

SOME NOTABLE DATES.

Born on Sawan *badi* 12, Samvat 1598, corresponding to 20th July 1541 A.D.

Married Rajkumari Jasmadeji, daughter of Rana Udai Singhji of Udaipur, on Magh *sudi* 5, Samvat 1620, corresponding to 18th January 1564 A.D.

Ascended the Throne on Baisakh *sudi* 1, Samvat 1628, corresponding to 25th April, 1571 A.D.

Wars and Expeditions, *vide* Appendix "A", page 185.

Bikaner Fort. Foundation laid on Baisakh *sudi*, 3, Samvat 1645, corresponding to 18th April 1588 A.D.

Died on Magh *badi* 30, Samvat 1668, corresponding to 22nd January 1612 A.D., at the age of 70 years and 6 months.

THE LIFE AND EXPLOITS OF RAJA RAI SINGHJI (1541-1612 A.D.)

CHAPTER I. LINEAGE AND TRADITIONS. FOUNDATION OF THE STATE

The State of Bikaner, by the grace of God and under the blessings of the Tutelary Deities of the House of Bikaner, Sri Karniji and Sri Lakshmi Narayanji, was founded by Rao Bikanji, the eldest surviving son of Rao Jodhaji, founder of Jodhpur, in A. D. 1459, as a separate Kingdom, totally independent in every respect of the parent Kingdom of Jodhpur.

Civilisations have come and gone. Yet it is no exaggeration to state that an unbroken line of illustrious rulers has kept intact the independence of the Bikaner State and its proud position as one of the important principalities of the Indian Empire¹ and one of the "the Premier States of Rajputana."²

H. H. THE PRESENT MAHARAJAH.

3. His Highness Lieutenant-General Maharajadhiraj Raj Rajeshwar Narendra Shiromani Sri Ganga Singhji Bahadur, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., K.C.B., A.D.C., LL.D., the present Maharajah, is the 21st in the long line of distinguished Rulers of Bikaner. His Highness was born on the 13th October 1880, ascended the throne on the 31st August 1887 and assumed the reins of administration on the 16th December 1898.

RAO BIKAJI'S CONQUESTS.

4. The enterprising youth Rao Bikaji, on leaving his motherland, settled on the northern frontier of the Jodhpur State among the Sankhals of Janglu,³ whom he conquered. Thence he turned

¹ Cf. Col. J. Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

² Vide letter dated the 11th April 1933 from the Political Secretary to the Government of India to His Highness the Maharajah of Bikaner.

³ Janglu is the ancient name of the country which is included within the boundaries of the present State of Bikaner.

his eyes to the north-east, where a vast tract of country partly in the hands of the warlike Jats and partly ruled by the bellicose Mohils tempted his ambition, and he embarked on a campaign of conquest, which, in a short time, made him the lord of all the country that is now included within the territories of the Bikaner State, with about 17,000 square miles more, which, in the turbulent times that followed, slipped out of the hands of his descendants.

5. Bhatinda, Depalpur, Bhatner, Sirsa, Nagore and Derawar¹ all bowed to his victorious sword. According to Major E. D. Erskine, Rao Bikaji's conquests also extended to Sindh, where he wrested some tract of country from the Baluchis. "What a splendid monument of human enterprise and determination," to quote Dr. L. P. Tessitori, "this man, Viko, leaves to his posterity! Departed from the cliffs of Mandora with a handful of followers, he now possesses an army capable to accept a fight with powerful enemies like the Langahs of Multan,"²

¹ Now situated in the Bahawalpur State.

² The province of Multan was ruled in the 15th and 16th centuries A. D. by a Muslim Dynasty known as the Langahs. According to *Tarkhan Nama*, a history of Sindh, written by Sayed Jamal in or about 1654 A.D., the army of the Langahs was a hundred-fold greater than the army of the Kings of Sindh. When the then Amir invaded Multan, in or about 1504 A.D., he was able to raise an army of 80,000 horse and of one month, in his own territories.

the Imperials of Jhunjhunu¹ and the Subedar of (the Kings of Delhi at) Ajmer!"

6. Col. P. W. Powlett, in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State, records that the territory of Ra Bikaji consisted of more than three thousand villages, excluding the territory near Rewari and Hissar. It comprised an approximate area of about 40,000 square miles.

7. "Such expeditions as that of Bika," to quote Col. Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, "undertaken expressly for conquest, were almost uniformly successful. The invaders set out with a determination to slay or be slain . . . when the warlike creed of the Rajputs made the abstraction of territory from foe or friend a matter of religious duty".

THE RATHORES: THEIR PRISTINE GLORY.

8. The amazingly rapid conquests of Ra Bikaji and his band of vigorous Rathores were in keeping with the traditions of the Rathores of old, whose early history is shrouded in "the mist of ages".² According to the investigations made by

¹ Jhunjhunu was then an important Suba of the Musalman Kings of Delhi. It is now situated within the territories of the Jaipur State.

² Vide Col. Tod's *Annals & Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

that well-known and eminent Research Scholar and Antiquarian, the late Sir R. G. Bhandarkar—which are corroborated by the records of the Archæological Survey in Western India¹—"the Rastrakuta² race of Kshatriyas, were the real Native Rulers of the country", and, "the main branch of the race of Kshatriyas named Ratthas, who gave their name to the country of Maharashtra, were found in it even in the times of Asoka", *i.e.*, in the third century B.C.³

9. Amoghavarsha, one of the famous Kings of this dynasty, whose reign is chronicled even by Arab historians, ruled in the Deccan in the ninth Century A.D. All princes and chiefs between the eastern and the western oceans of the Indian Peninsula, and from the Himalayas in the North to Simhala (Ceylon) in the South, paid obeisance to him.⁴

10. Amoghavarsha ruled for 63 years, from 814 to 877 A.D.⁵ and was "the greatest and the

¹ Cf. Arch. Surv., West Ind., No. 10.

² The descendants of the Emperor Rastrakuta, after whose name the race is called Rastrakutas, now known as Rathores.

³ Other well-known historians have also confirmed this fact.

⁴ Cf. "Government Oriental Series—Class B, No. III, collected Works of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, Vol. III, comprising "Early History of the Deccan and Miscellaneous Historical Essays."

⁵ In 877 A.D., after ruling for 63 years, Amoghavarsha, his son, Govinda II *alias* Akalvarsha, on the throne, to lead the life of a *vanaprastha*, or an anchorite.—V

most famous amongst all the Kings of India as they all owe allegiance to him". His territories extended from Konkan (in Southern India) to China. According to Sulaiman, an Arab historian, he was one of the four great Emperors of the world in his time. Sulaiman further states that when Amoghavarsha "deputes his Ambassadors to the Courts of other Kings, they (i.e., the other Kings) receive them with great respect and honour considering the high honour that is due to him."²

11. A branch of the Imperial House of Rashtrakuta migrated to Northern India, where we find them enthroned in all the splendour of a great and gorgeous Royalty at Kanauj in the fifth century A.D. The Kingdom of "Kanauj was the most powerful of all the Kingdoms of Hindusthan, and its capital on the Ganges was unrivalled for its greatness and its wealth. The Capital was the centre of a great trade. Its buildings were magnificent, and it aspired to be first without a rival. Its fame extended to the Arabs and Chinese. During the eighth and ninth centuries the vassal

ratnamaliḥa composed by him after abdicating the throne, "in consequence of the growth of the ascetic spirit within him," quoted in the "Chronology of India" by C. Mabel Duff.

² Vide "*Silsilat-ul-Tawarikh*" (i.e., Series of Histories) by Sulaiman, an Arab traveller, who visited India in 851 A.D.

Kings of the Eastern Punjab and of the Terai recognized its suzerainty."¹

12. Jai Chand, King of Kanauj, was killed in a war with Shahabuddin Ghorī in 1194 A.D. The near-kinsmen of Jai Chand, with about 200 retainers, the wreck of their vast army, proud in their poverty and sole heritage—the glory of Kanauj—unwilling to submit to the conqueror, sallied forth, under the leadership of Rao Siahji, a grandson of Jai Chand, to carve their fortunes “in the scrub and desert of Rajputana”.

13. Siahji planted the standard of the Rathores first at Pali, near Sojat, where almost on the very day of his arrival he had to engage his gallant band in a sanguinary battle with the Minas, who were harassing the Brahmans of the place. The Rathores attacked the Minas vigorously and put them to flight. Emboldened by this success, they seized Kher from the Gohel tribe. In course of time, Siahji's three enterprising sons (*viz.*, Sutik, Ashwatthama and Aj) brought a considerable portion of Rajputana and Guzerat under their rule. Ashwatthama and his descendants had ruled in Marwar for over 250 years, when Rao Bikaji left the paternal home at Mandor in order to carve out and establish

¹ Cf. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Volume II, 1908 edition, Chapter VIII, on “Mediaeval History of Northern India : the Hindu Period.”

a separate and independent kingdom for himself and his descendants.

THE FAMILY HEIR-LOOMS.

14. On the death of Rao Jodhaji, in 1491 A.D., Rao Bikaji, as the eldest living son, sent his faithful master of the Stables, Bela Parihar, to Rao Sujaji of Jodhpur, for the family heir-looms which Rao Jodhaji had, during his life time, promised to hand over to Bikaji in recognition of the latter's position as the eldest of the surviving Princes. Many of these famous objects of veneration for the Rathores were brought by Rao Siahji from Kanauj, when the Rathores migrated, in A.D. 1212, and were held in veneration by the Rulers of Jodhpur.

15. On Rao Sujaji's refusing to part with the family heir-looms, Rao Bikaji decided to assert his claim by force and soon mobilised his army, now larger than ever before and consisting of about 30,000 (foot and mounted) soldiers. Col. Powlett, in describing the engagements that followed, records that Sujaji's force met Bikaji's a *kos* from Jodhpur, but it was put to flight and driven through the city, which for six hours was given up to plunder. The fort was then invested, and was soon reduced to straits for want of water.

16. Sujaji's mother then proposed a conference. On behalf of Rao Bikaji, the men who many years before had left Jodhpur with him when he set-off on his adventures, and who ever since had been his trusted counsellors and servants, attended the conference. But, no settlement was arrived at and there was fresh fighting for two days, when Sujaji's mother, Rani Jasmadeji (widow of Rao Jodhaji), herself came to Bikaji. He agreed to raise the siege on receipt of the heir-looms; and, these being delivered, he returned to Bikaner.

17. The family heir-looms consisted of the following articles :

- (1) A Sandalwood Throne (*singhasan*) of the Emperors of Kanauj, brought by the Rathores from Kanauj some 725 years 'ago';¹
- (2) The Chhatra, or Royal Umbrella ;
- (3) Chanwar ;
- (4) Sword of Rao Jodhaji ;
- (5) Shield of Rao Jodhaji ;
- (6) Katar (dagger) of Harbuji Sankhla ;
- (7) Hiranyagarbha Murti of Shri Lakshmi Narayanji, which is still kept in Har Mandir in the Fort ;
- (8) Large silver Murti of Nagnechni Devi ;
- (9) Karand, a box, which bears an inscription to the effect that it was in the "sewa" (puja)

¹ This *Singhasan* is to this day used, in preference to the Golden Throne in the Fort, by Their Highnesses the Maharajah and the Maharani on Dasahra and other special occasions.

of Rao Duhadji, grandson of Rao Sihaji. It is kept in the Devidwara Temple of Nagnechniji in the Fort ;

- (10) Dakshinavart shankh (sacred conch) ;
- (11) Bhanwar Dhol (big drum) of Rao Choondaji ;
- (12) Bairisal Nagara (the "Foe-frightening" Kettle-Drum), "the gift of the Saint Thapan Jambha" to the ancestors of Rao Jodhaji ;
- (13) Bhunjai Dega (ancient ceremonial cauldrons) ;
and
- (14) The steed "Dal Singar",—"Ornament of the Army".

18. These heir-looms have ever since remained in the possession of, and are highly prized and venerated by, the Rulers of Bikaner. They are preserved in the Fort.

RAO LUNKARANJI.

19. The glorious figure of Rao Bikaji was succeeded, in 1504 A.D., by his son Naroji, who did not survive more than a few months and left room on the screen for his brother Loonkaranji.

20. The sword of Rao Bikaji did not rust in the hands of Loonkaranji who, soon after his accession, repelled the attack of and defeated Muhammad Khan, Nawab of Nagore, and led an expedition against Jaisalmer, putting the Bhatias to flight.

21. His third campaign was directed against Jodhpur when, with lightning rapidity, he took Didwana and other towns of Jodhpur and routed the Marwari forces. Thereafter he marched against Jhunjhunu and Narnaul, then provinces in the Muslim Kingdom of Delhi. Here, a large body of Pathans fell on him. The forces were unequal. The small army of Lunkaran was shattered and he was asked to surrender. But, can a Bika ever surrender? Enraged at this proposal, he threw himself into the thick of the battle and, after wreaking vengeance on, and playing havoc with, the enemy forces, fell transfixcd by a hundred spears.

DEFEAT OF THE MOGHUL KING KAMRAN.

22. The reign of his son, Rao Jet Siji, is famous for defeat of the Moghul King, Kamran, brother of Humayun and uncle of Emperor Akbar. On the death of Babar, Kamran set himself up as independent sovereign of the Punjab and Afghanistan, with his headquarters at Lahore. The neighbouring country was dominated and subjugated by the Moghuls, except Bikaner. The proud spirit of Kamran could not view with equanimity the independence of Rao Jet Siji who, unbending and unconcerned, stood aloof when the other princes and chiefs of Hindustan did homage and paid tributes to the Moghul Kings at Delhi or Lahore.

23. Kamran, therefore, determined that Rao Jetsi, too, must bow his head or be taught a lesson. Orders were given for mobilisation of the Army and soldiers assembled from all parts of the country, including Afghanistan, at Lahore. A huge army was collected in a short time. Tall and stout Pathans, red complexioned and with broad distorted features, armed with bows, muskets and other weapons of war, gathered round their whinnying horses: horses of all colours and breeds,—such as, Irakee, Turki, Yabu, Tazee, Makurani, Arab, Mushki, Khurasanee and Tartar.

24. Mounting in fury, the frightful army swept down upon Bhatner (now known as Hanuman-ji) and surrounded the fort. An envoy was sent to Khetsi Ararakamalot, a Kandhal Rathore, who was in command of the fort, suggesting him to surrender the fort. “Come Sultan! Come and face my spear!” was the proud reply of the brave Rathore. The invaders besieged the fort and began to rain into it a hail of cannon shots.

25. The Rathores held firm until the Pathans scaled the walls and innumerable hordes poured into the fort. Overwhelmed, and with his small force decimated, Khetsi, robed in a saffron garb and with naked sword in his hand, sallied forth to spread

destruction among the invaders before he was over-borne and fell pierced by numerous spears.

26. Emboldened by this success, the Moghuls sped on to Bikaner and sent the following message to Rao Jet Siji :

मेल्हिय प्रधान कहियउ सुगुलि
 धर साजि मुहर ह म करि दिल्हि ।
 छां छत्र सारिस म म जाहि छेहिहि
 दस कोड़ि द्रव्व वौवाह देहि¹ ॥

Come, O Ruler ! under shelter of the
 Moghul King !

Unloosen the strings of thy purse.

Bring a tribute of ten crores and a bride.

27. The formidable Bika, crown of the Rathore clan, blazed forth with indignation at these infamous proposals and drove back the messenger, yelling defiance: "Tell the devil Kamran, no Rathore has ever fled before a Mohammedan. Rao Bikaji drove back the Imperial army of Delhi and, even as my father, Lunkaran, put to flight the Nawab of Nagore, so shall I assuredly beat Kamran !"

28. Next morning, at day-break, the Fort of Bikaner was surrounded by a dense mass of

¹ Cf. *Rao Jetsi ro chhand*, composed by Vithu son of Suja about 1535 A.D.

elephants and horses, caparisoned with glittering and sparkling outfits, led by fierce men armed with deadly weapons and shields. The Moghul army spread into the town like a swarm of locusts and seized women and cattle. Rao Jet Siji had in the meanwhile already left the Fort¹ and, with the saddle of his horse as his throne, was ransacking the country rallying his forces and vassals. The brave Rao was soon surrounded by the flower of the Bikaner chiefs and nobles impatiently waiting, and urging, for opportunity to fall on the enemy.

29. Half the night had already passed and the waning moon was dimly illuminating the white tents of the invaders, when, lo! the Rathore drums suddenly disturbed the silence of the night and the warriors of Rao Jet Siji were seen charging with all the speed of their horses at the enemy. The Pathans hurriedly grasped their swords and bows and muskets and discharged showers of arrows and grapeshot on the onrushing Rathores. But, filling the atmosphere with loud peels of "Jai Rama", the

¹ According to Col. Powlett's Gazetteer of Bikaner, prior to the fight, Rao Jet Siji consulted the Oracle at Deshnoke. Sri Karniji was propitious, manifested a hand, spoke graciously, and, on the Rao's laying his arms before her image, caused an arrow to fit itself to the bow-string, thus blessing his enterprise and encouraging him to give battle to the Moghul King.

Bikaner troops rushed into the enemy tents with tiger-like fury.

30. The gallant Rao Jet Siji, vying in intrepidity with the bravest of his soldiers, threw his horse where the scuffle was for the time being fiercest and presented the spectacle of a lion among a herd of cattle. The Rathore swords played havoc smiting, piercing, shattering armours and chopping-off heads and limbs with the rapidity of a deluge, till the whole Moghul Camp was filled with wounded soldiers and carcasses of the dead. The Bikaner troops, too, suffered heavy losses, but the Moghuls were routed and, when the sun dawned in the morning, the whole camp was a weltering mass of blood and carnage.¹

31. The remnant of the Pathan hordes were seen flying for their lives towards Lahore. Indeed, such was the hurry and confusion of Kamran's retreat that, when his royal umbrella dropped-off at the village of Chotriya, he could not muster-up courage to stop and pick it up.² This village was bestowed by Rao Jet Siji on Charans who still

¹ This event happened in 1534 A.D.

² Kamran's brief reign is remembered chiefly on account of his cruelties and for his hostilities against Humayun. Nemesis was dogging his footsteps. Sultan Adam, Chief of the Ghakkars, one day betrayed him to Humayun, who determined that Kamran should pay the penalty of his crimes by being blinded. Kamran,

preserve the umbrella as a memento of the Rathore victory over the Moghuls.

32. Rao Jet Siji, after defeating the Moghul army, hastened to liberate the captured women and cows from the unpius barbarians and restore them to their own people. The victory was celebrated by the distribution of gifts to Chiefs and Nobles and Charans and by feeding the poor.

RAJA KALYAN SINGHJI.

33. The notable feat of Rao, afterwards Raja,¹ Kalyan Singhji's reign consisted in recovering the Fort and a small portion of the Bikaner

when acquainted of his fate, entreated to be killed rather than tortured, but without avail. A handkerchief, twisted-up as a ball, was thrust into his mouth in order to suppress his cries. A *farrash* threw him down on the ground and put hot lancet into his eyes, a process which was repeated 50 times. Kamran bore the anguish in a manly manner, which gave an impression to the tormentor that the torture was not sufficient. A lemon was then squeezed and the juice was mixed with salt and poured into the sockets of his eyes. Kamran could bear it no longer and began to writhe in agony.—*Vide Tazkiratu-l Wakiat* written, in or about 1587 A.D., by Jauhar and translated into English by Major Stewart. Published by the Oriental Translation Fund, London, in 1832.

¹ Col. Powlett was apparently misinformed when he stated in his *Gazetteer of Bikaner* that Rai Singhji was the first Bikaner "Raja". It is clear from the evidence of reliable contemporaneous historians, cited in Chapter II, that Kalyan Singhji, too, held the title of "Raja" from the Moghul Emperor. In justice to Col. Powlett, it may be stated that the historical material now extant was not available to him when he wrote his *Gazetteer of Bikaner* in or about 1870 A.D.

territory that had at the time of Rao Jet Siji's fall, in the field of battle, on the occasion of Jodhpur's invasion of 1542 A.D., been temporarily usurped by Rao Maldeo of Jodhpur. The Rathore Princes of Bikaner had, by their intrepidity, character and bravery, won such great appreciation from King Sher Shah of Delhi that when the fact and circumstances of such occupation were made known to him, His Majesty exclaimed: "Although I may lose Delhi, you will surely recover your lands held for generations by your ancestors".

34. It was not necessary for Kalyan Singhji to have recourse to help from the King of Delhi for recovering his patrimony, as he succeeded in laying siege to the Fort of Bikaner, and driving away Rao Maldeo and his army, with his own troops and the levies furnished by his loyal Chiefs and Nobles. In this war, the forces of Rao Maldeo were utterly defeated and he was forced to escape to the hills with a small body of men. The offer of the King Sher Shah is nevertheless an index of the high esteem in which the Ruler of Bikaner was held at the Imperial Court.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE.

A GREAT PERSONALITY.

It was in an atmosphere surcharged with such high and noble traditions of chivalry and upright intrepidity that Rai Singhji was brought up. Major K. D. Erskine, in his 'Rajputana Gazetteer', speaks of him as "one of Akbar's most distinguished Generals, seeing service in various parts of India, such as Jodhpur, the country around Attock, Gujarat, Sirohi, Bengal, the Deccan, Sind, Udaipur and the Punjab".

2. Col. Tod, whose 'Annals of Bikaner' are in several instances characterised by a spirit of malevolence, due probably to the absence of first-hand and direct knowledge of the affairs of Bikaner, and who can not by any means be accused of partiality for the House of Bikaner, nevertheless had to admit that "Raja Rai Singh led a gallant band of his Rathores in ALL the wars of Akbar" and that, through the valour and martial exploits of Rai Singhji, "in this reign ALSO Bikaner rose to importance amongst the principalities of the Empire."

3. Bikaner was about this time dressed in all the pomp and splendour of a great Court. Gems glittered in, and Chiefs of rank attended, the Darbar. Stately elephants, caparisoned in gold and silver trappings, were tied at posts outside the Palace gate. Flags fluttered on the roof of the Palace. Bards and dancers from Guzerat and other parts of India recited panegyrics and performed in the presence of the gallant Lord of the Rathores. But the comforts of prosperity did not make Rai Singhji lose sight of the fact that the fighting spirit, which had made possible the creation of such a vast State, must needs be kept alive in order to defend and consolidate the Bikaner territories.

4. Rai Singhji realised early that the best guarantee for peace was an ever vigilant preparedness for war. He did not, therefore, let the sword of his ancestors rust in his hands.

INTERNAL TURBULENCE.

5. The vast territory conquered by Rao Bikaji was yet in a state of flux and fluidity. The Jats, the Johiyas, the Mohils and the Bhattis, though they had parted with vestiges of sovereignty to the Rathores, yet preserved in a great measure their ancient traditions and privileges. The maintenance and exercise of such privileges was inconvenient for

the now super-abundant Rathore population. Rai Singhji's first steps towards the consolidation of his dominions, consisted in divesting the ancient tribes of all emblems of political authority and the shearing of cognate privileges.

SUBJUGATION OF THE JOHIYAS.

6. He sent an expedition, in command of his brother Ram Singhji, against the Johiyas who, always troublesome, had lately revolted and made an attempt to regain their ancient independence. The Rathores were naturally annoyed at this insurrection and carried fire and sword into the six hundred villages then populated by this community. Most of the villages still exist but the Johiyas had to pay the penalty of their disaffection by complete political annihilation. The Johiya civilisation is now almost lost, though various old ruins in the territory once occupied by them bear testimony to their one-time importance and glory.

WARS AGAINST THE JATS.

7. Rai Singhji next turned his attention to the Punia Jats, who then inhabited about 300 villages in the vicinity of Bhadra, Sidhmukh, Rajgarh, Ajitpur, Dadrewa and Sankhu, etc. These people, too, had recently raised their heads. After considerable warfare, in which the gallant Ram Singhji was

slain in a brave sortie against the rebels, the Punias were vanquished, and the Rathores were once more formally inducted into their most valuable possessions.

8. One by one, all the Jat cantons and other ancient Rajput principalities that existed in the territories since conquered by Rao Bikaji, and which at that time comprised the State of Bikaner, were divested of their political importance and power. Their descendants still inhabit the country, but they are now primarily occupied in agriculture and other pastoral and industrial pursuits, and are loyal subjects of the Crown. Many of them still inherit military traditions and constitute valuable recruiting material not only for the Army of the State but also for the British-Indian forces.¹

EXPEDITION AGAINST NAGORE.

9. One of the earliest military exploits in which Rai Singhji was engaged was an

¹ The proud record of the Military Services rendered by the Rulers of Bikaner and the State Troops, in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Great War of 1914-18, and in numerous other Wars and Campaigns testify to the unique "construction which the Bikaner State placed on their Treaty obligations" with the British Crown and which, judged from His Highness the present Maharajah's standard, consists in his determination "to stand first in the service of the Empire". The quotations are from the speech delivered by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, at the State Banquet in Bikaner, on the 5th January, 1925.

expedition against Nagore. What a splendid monument of human enterprise and determination is furnished by this expedition !

10. The fort¹ and the province of Nagore was at this time held by Haji Khan, a commander in the reign of the late King Sher Shah of Delhi and a person "who was distinguished for courage, prudence and skill in collecting troops."² He had since established himself as an independent ruler in Alwar in defiance of the Moghul authority. On being dispossessed of the Alwar fort by Akbar, Haji Khan repaired to Ajmer in order to make preparations for renewing the war.

11. It appears from *Mirat-i-Sikandari* that Haji Khan was travelling with 5,000 horse and 150 elephants at the time. Rana Udai Singhji, Ruler of Mewar, came up with a large force³ and blocked his passage. Udai Singhji demanded from Haji

¹ The Fort of Nagore was, it is believed, built in the reign of Bahram Shah, a king of the Ghaznvide dynasty, who ruled from 1117 to 1158 A.D. During the reign of Ghyasuddin Balban, about 1260 A.D., Nagore rose to great importance as a strategic province of the Delhi Kingdom. The historian, Abdulla, in his work *Tazjiyatul-Amsar* (written in 1300 A.D.) describes Nagore as one of the celebrated cities and political divisions of India. King Sher Shah (A.D. 1539-1545) maintained an Imperial garrison at Nagore.

² *Vide Akbar Namah.*

³ According to *Akbar Namah*, the Chitaur forces on this occasion numbered about 40,000 horse.

Khan, as tribute, 40 maunds of gold, his best elephants, and a dancing girl—the most beautiful of his women. Haji Khan was willing to give gold and elephants but got indignant when the name of an inmate of his *harem* was mentioned. Udai Singhji thereupon put him to intolerable trouble, as a result of which a battle took place between the Rana and Haji Khan near Ajmer. Haji Khan is reported to have displayed considerable bravery and performed great actions in this engagement; and, ultimately, defeated Udai Singhji and took possession of Ajmer, Nagore and the surrounding country.

12. When the news of Haji Khan's success and capture of Nagore was reported to the Emperor, he appointed Sayad Mohammed Kasim Khan, a senior Mansabdar, and some other commanders to march against Haji Khan. But intelligence was soon brought to Akbar that Haji Khan was strong enough to offer a stout resistance to the Imperial troops sent against him and that his subjugation would not be possible. Whereupon, the Emperor proceeded to Hissar with a view to send reinforcements from there.

13. The territories of Hissar (including its two forts and the garrison stationed therein), at this time, formed part and parcel of the dominion of Bikaner. It was, therefore, probably at

that, at the behest of his father, Rai Singhji led an expedition of the Bikaner forces on Nagore against Haji Khan.

14. The young Rajkumar engaged the proud and powerful Khan in a sharp battle, which lasted several days. The Khan was very obstinate and fought bravely, but when he found that he could not stand the furious onslaughts of Rai Singhji and his forces, he saved his life by fleeing away.¹

15. Col. Tod has stated that the capture of Nagore took place in 1561 A.D., and, according to him, this event nearly coincided with the fall of Merta, which was besieged by Akbar in person, assisted by his brother-in-law, Mirza Sharafud-din Hussain. Rai Singhji must, under these circumstances, have led his expedition against the Khan when he was about 20 years of age and nearly 10 years before he ascended the throne.

16. The territory of Nagore did not pass into the hands of Rai Singhji immediately after the defeat of Haji Khan, which enterprise was apparently undertaken by him on behalf of the Emperor. Our reasons for holding this view are

¹ This version receives verification from Col. Powlett's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner', wherein it is stated: 'The first service he (i.e., Rai Singhji) was employed on was an expedition against the Khan of Nagore, who had fallen under the Emperor's displeasure. Rai Singhji defeated the Khan.'

based on the fact that, as stated in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Mirza Sharafud-din Hussain was appointed as Governor of Ajmer and Nagore in 1562,—a position which he held for nearly a year. Ajmer and Nagore were then given, in *tayyul* (fief), to Khan-i-Jahan, Hussain Kulli Khan. During the first Guzerat War, in 1572, Nagore was in the *tayyul* (fief) of Khan-i-Kalan, Mir Mohammad. The Sarkar of Nagore was thus, in all probability, granted to Rai Singhji by the Emperor after the second Guzerat War in recognition of his eminent and meritorious services to the Emperor in that campaign.

17. It may be mentioned that both Sheikh Faizi and Sheikh Abul Fazal, famous Ministers of Akbar, were residents of Nagore and had migrated from this place to Agra. In some ancient Persian works, the former is styled as "Faizi of Nagore".

PRESENTS FROM THE KING OF SINDH.

18. An idea of the political importance of Bikaner in the inter-statal history of India may be gathered from the fact that during the reign of Rai Singhji friendly presents in the shape of Arab Horses, laden with different kinds of valuable articles, were received at the Court of Bikaner from the then independent King of Sindh.¹

¹ *Vide Beglar Nama*, a book written, in 1625 A.D. It is a history of Sindh.

19. It appears that cordial friendship subsisted between the Rulers of Bikaner and the Kings of Sindh and there were occasional deputations of envoys from one Court to the other. Having regard to the fact that the territories of the Bikaner State at that time extended to, and included portions of, Sindh,¹ exchanges of such courtesy were but natural.

FIRST CONTACT WITH AKBAR.

20. When Akbar, after paying his annual visit to Ajmer, arrived at Nagore, in A.D. 1570, Rai Singhji with his father met His Majesty. The Emperor was so favourably impressed by the sincerity and the martial bearing of the young Raja that he requested Raja Kalyan Singhji to let Rai Singhji remain in attendance on His Majesty, at whose Court, to quote Nizamuddin Ahmad's *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Rai Singhji soon "received high promotion" and rose to exalted status and position.

21. The statement made in some historical books that the title of Raja was for the first time conferred by the Moghul Emperor on Rai Singhji is

¹ Rao Bikaji had, by about 1488 A.D., not only conquered Sheikhavati from the Kaimkhanis, lands of Khichis and Mohils, but had also wrested some tracts of country from the *Baluchis in Sindh*. Vide, 'Gazetteer of Bikaner' by Major K. D. Erskine, I.A., C.I.E. : Pioneer Press, Allahabad, 1909.

refuted by the fact that in *Tabakat-i-Akbari*,¹ "one of the most celebrated histories of India", written as far back as 1595 A.D., it is recorded, in chronicling the events of this visit, that "Raja Kalyan Mal, the Raja of Bikaner, also came with his son" to meet the Emperor. From this quotation it is evident that, prior to Rai Singhji's accession to the throne, Kalyan Singhji enjoyed the title of 'Raja'.

22. Soon after ascending the throne, Rai Singhji paid another visit to the Emperor at Agra. On this occasion, he was accompanied by a Bikaneri army of 5,000 (foot and mounted), including 1,000 horses and 200 camels. He stayed for some months at Agra as a guest of the Emperor.

23. The contact so inaugurated was, in the years to come, destined to play an important part not only in the annals of Bikaner but also in the history of the Empire. The dashing prowess and high martial virtues of Rai Singhji and other Cadets of the House of Bikaner found a fruitful field for action in the wars of Akbar and, in several instances, proved a decisive factor in the extension and consolidation of the Moghul Empire.

¹ Farishta, in his 'History of India', states that of all the earlier histories consulted by him, *Tabakat-i-Akbari* was the only one that he found complete in the detailed description of the events narrated therein.

MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES.

24. No matrimonial connections are deemed superior among the Rajput Princes, or are more valued, than those with the Udaipur Reigning Family. This sentiment is primarily based on the theory that the Rulers of Udaipur successfully withstood the onslaughts of the Moghul Emperors and preferred cruel privations and intolerable sufferings to the vassalage of Akbar and other Muslim monarchs.

25. Another tradition prevalent among the Rajput States is that whilst daughters of Rulers of Junior States are taken in marriage, no girl of a socially Senior House is given in marriage except to one who possesses high lineage, in addition, of course, to pure Rajput blue blood.

26. Judged from this criteria, the matrimonial alliances of the House of Bikaner, where girls have been given to, and taken in marriage from, the Sisodia House of Udaipur, rank among the highest and noblest in Rajputana. The fact of such alliances is also evidenced by the Government of India Publication entitled "Chiefs and Leading Families in Rajputana," 1894 Edition, where it is recorded :

"Intermarriages between the Mewar and Bikaner Ruling houses have been frequent in the past In former times also several

marriages took place with Jaipur and Jaisalmer."

27. Within 50 years of the founding of the Bikaner State, and about 420 years ago, Rao Bikaji's son, Rao Lunkaranji, was married to the sister of the famous Rana Sangaji of Mewar. Since then, numerous inter-marriages between the Houses of Bikaner and Udaipur have taken place.

28. Both Raja Rai Singhji and his younger brother, Rajkumar Prithwi Rajji, were wedded to two princesses of Udaipur. The nuptials of Rai Singhji were celebrated on Magh *sudi* 5, Samvat 1620 (18th January 1564 A.D.), with Rajkumari Jasmadeji, daughter of Rana Udai Singhji. The Rana came $2\frac{1}{2}$ kos (5 miles) out of the city to receive the bridegroom and his party. On this occasion, Raja Kalyan Singhji gave away 500 horses and 50 elephants to Charans and a *nichharawal* of Rs. 1,00,000 was distributed.

29. In 1592 A.D., Rai Singhji married princess Gangadeviji, daughter of Rawal Har Rajji, Ruler of Jaisalmer. Raja Sur Singhji was the issue from this union.

30. It appears that Rao Surthan of Sirohi also visited Jaisalmer for marrying another daughter of Rawal Har Rajji at the same time when Rai Singhji's nuptials were celebrated. A somewhat

interesting anecdote concerning this marriage is recorded in Col. Powlett's Gazetteer. It runs thus:

Surthan had a Charan, Gaipo by name, who had a habit of insultingly addressing every one as 'tu', and was called in consequence 'Gaipo, tu karo'. Surthan fearing lest he should 'tu' people at Jaisalmer had left him behind, but Gaipo had a mind to come, and he came and was present at the 'samela' or meeting of the bridegroom and the bride's relatives. Here he recited some lines, which pleased Rai Singh, who gave him an elephant, mounted on which he went to his master and told him that he had addressed Raja Rai Singh, the greatest person at Jaisalmer. Surthan, who in Bikaner estimation was not superior in rank to some of Rai Singh's followers, was greatly ashamed of his charan, whom he presently found lodged in the tent of the Raja's brother, and instead of complying with Surthan's orders to leave, he commended Surthan to outdo Rai Singhji's liberality; or, said Gaipo, notwithstanding the reputation of the Bikaner Raja, and the impossibility of competing with him in the value of his gifts, Surthan would excel him in generosity if he stripped his tent and gave everything to Charans, which Surthan immediately went and did.

CHAPTER III.

THE GUZERAT WARS.

CAUSES OF THE WAR.

In the chaos and disorder that ensued on the downfall and dismemberment of the Afghan dynasties which ruled in India, prior to the establishment of the Moghul Empire, Guzerat managed to convert itself into an independent kingdom. Sultan Mahmud, king of Guzerat, was murdered in 1554 A.D. and, in the absence of a lineal descendant, Razi-ul-mulk, a near kinsman, was raised to the throne under the title of Ahmad Shah. As he was very young, the affairs of the State were managed entirely by the Vazir, I'tmad Khan. When Ahmed Shah grew-up, he found I'tmad too powerful and tried by various means to get rid of the Vazir. I'tmad Khan at last felt so insecure that he resolved to kill the king and, soon afterwards, did it.

2. An infant, believed to be posthumous son of Sultan Mahmud, was then proclaimed king under the title of Sultan Muzaffar Shah. I'tmad continued to be at the head of the Government, but could not control the *amirs*, who started parcelling-out the country among themselves and were soon involved

in incessant internecine feuds. The whole of Guzerat thus became a vast scene of oppressions and insurrections.

3. The Mirzas (*viz.*, Ibrahim Hussain Mirza, Mohammed Hussain Mirza, Muzaffar Hussain Mirza and Masud Hussain Mirza) were Timurides and descended from the same stock as Emperor Akbar. These Mirzas originally held a Jagir from Babar in *pargana* Azampur, district Sambhal (now known as Moradabad). When Mirza Mohammed Hakim, brother of Akbar and king of Kabul, invaded India, in 1566 A.D., and besieged Lahore, the Mirzas rebelled and made an unsuccessful attempt to wrest Delhi from Akbar, who soon defeated both the invader and the disaffected Jagirdars of Azampur. The Mirzas then fled to Guzerat, where the prevalent anarchy enabled them, with little fighting, to occupy Baroda, Champaner Broach, Surat¹ and other parts of Guzerat in defiance of the Emperor and lay pretence to independence.

4. In alliance with Changez Khan, a powerful and ambitious *Amir* of Guzerat, the Mirzas advanced on Ahmedabad. In the battle that followed, Changez Khan was killed, I'tmad Khan was

¹ Ibrahim Hussain Mirza held Baroda, Mohammed Hussain Mirza held Surat, and Shah Hussain Mirza held Champaner,—*vide Akbar Nama*.

defeated and the country of Guzerat fell into the hands of the Mirzas. I'tmad Khan fled to Agra.

5. In the Court of the Emperor, the affairs of Guzerat had for some time been a frequent topic of discussion and information was continually brought about oppression by its petty rulers and of the state of anarchy that was prevalent in its towns and cities. The intrigues of I'tmad Khan served the purpose of adding fuel to the fire and excited the Emperor's cupidity.

THE FIRST GUZERAT WAR.

6. Now that His Majesty's mind was at ease by the suppression of disturbances in other parts of the Empire, Akbar gave orders for the mobilisation of his troops. Khan-i-Kalan¹ was sent in advance with 10,000 horse and Akbar followed, in September 1572 A.D., with a further large military contingent.

7. Rao Maldeo of Jodhpur was at this time hostile to the Emperor. As the high-road to Guzerat lay through the territories of the Jodhpur State, the

¹ Khan-i-Kalan, Mir Mohammed, was a Mansabdar of five thousand. He served under Kamran and Humayun and rose to high dignity during the reign of Akbar. As Governor of the Punjab, he distinguished himself in war with the Ghakkars. In 1564 A.D., he assisted Mirza Mohammed Hakim, brother of Akbar, in regaining the throne of Kabul and restoring order in Afghanistan. He held Sambhal as Jagir.

security of this road was of vital necessity for the success of the military operations in that part of the country. Akbar also apprehended, during his absence in Guzerat, an invasion from Rao Maldeo in the Delhi-Agra territory.

8. The important duty of keeping the high-road to Guzerat open and safe for passage of the Imperial armies and provisions, and of protecting the Royal capital (*viz.*, Agra) and the surrounding territory, during the absence of the Emperor and his forces, was entrusted to Rai Singhji, who, in addition to his own forces, was also allotted a contingent of the Imperial troops. As a further mark of consideration and honour, *Farmans* were issued by the Emperor to the *amirs*, *jagirdars* and governors of the surrounding territories and provinces, directing them to render Rai Singhji every assistance that he might require in the execution of his responsible duties.¹

9. The Ranas of Mewar had for long been a special object of Moslem fury owing to their stubborn refusal to accept the suzerainty of the Islamites. Nowhere in India did the Moslem fire and sword play greater havoc than in Mewar. The Ranas nursed their grievance and bided time. Rana Pratap had now become a source of constant vexation to the

¹ Cf. *Tabakat-i-Akbari*.

Emperor. He attacked Imperial caravans and plundered supplies,¹ way-laid military parties, captured Imperial messengers, invaded Moghul territories and occupied forts and, whenever he could do it, disturbed the peace and tranquillity of the Imperial territories in other ways. One of the many important tasks entrusted to Rai Singhji was the prevention of attacks from Rana Pratap.²

10. The duties entrusted to Rai Singhji were thus of considerable importance and give an indication of the great confidence and trust reposed by the Emperor in him. The success of the military operations in Guzerat was in no small measure due to the vigilance and the efficient manner in which Rai Singhji carried out the onerous duties entrusted to him.

11. Akbar's first move on reaching Guzerat was to intercept the Mirzas, who had already quitted their capitals, in an endeavour to join the main body of their troops, in the northern Guzerat, before offering battle to the Emperor.³ Akbar, by forced

¹ Col. Tod, in his *Annals of Mewar*, referring to Rana Pratap's activities, states: "Pratap rendered the garden of *Rajasthan* of no value to the conqueror, and the commerce already established between the Moghul Court and Europe, conveyed through Mewar from Surat and other parts, was intercepted and plundered."

² Cf. Major K. D. Erskine's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner.'

³ Cf. 'History of India' by Monstuart Elphinstone.

marches, succeeded in overtaking the Mirzas before they could attain their object, but he had advanced with such inconsiderate haste that he found himself confronted with the enemy while his main army was yet at a distance. With his handful of soldiers, Akbar commenced the attack but was repulsed and compelled to withdraw. Meanwhile, the Mirzas effected junction with their troops. Several engagements were thereafter fought with varying fortunes.

12. Two of the Mirzas (*viz.*, Mirza Ibrahim Hussain and Mirza Masud Hussain) were cut-off from the main force and, with the army at their command, proceeded to the north. At a distance of 11 *kos* from Merta, they plundered a caravan escorting the Imperial booty on its way from Guzerat to Agra. They then marched on Nagore, which was at the time held by Khan-i-Kalan in *tayyul* and was governed on his behalf by his son, Farrukh Khan. So great was the terror associated with the name of the Mirzas that Farrukh Khan, in dread and confusion, withdrew into the fort.¹ Nagore was soon surrounded by the forces of the Mirzas and given-up to plunder and rapine.

13. As soon as Rai Singhji, who was up day

¹ According to Faizi Sirhindi's *Akbar Nama*, the Mirzas besieged the Fort of Nagore and were on the point of taking it, when Rai Singhji reached Nagore and drove them away.

and night supervising the vast territory entrusted to his care, was apprized of the attack on Nagore by the Mirzas, he hurried with his troops and, after a fight, forced the Mirzas to raise the siege. He then rescued Farrukh Khan from his confinement and marched in pursuit of the Mirzas overtaking them at the village of Khatoli, some 40 miles from Nagore.¹ The Mirzas took the alarm and managed to make good their escape.

14. Rai Singhji was, however, determined not to be baulked of his prey. So he doggedly pursued the fugitives and engaged them in battle soon after. The Mirzas formed themselves into two divisions and attacked Rai Singhji and his troops simultaneously on both flanks, on three different occasions, but could not make any impression. Rai Singhji's troops not only held their own ground but succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat on the Mirzas, who, in the struggle, were separated and fled in various directions. Their soldiers were scattered in the neighbouring villages, where they were tracked and many of them were put to death. Nearly 200 men fell alive into the hands of Rai Singhji and were imprisoned.

15. The army of the Mirzas, which numbered about one thousand at Nagore, was reduced to only

¹ *Vide* Nizamud-din's *Tabakat-i-Akbari*.

about 300 men when they emerged from the encounter with Rai Singhji and fled to the north.

THE SECOND GUZERAT WAR.

16. Hardly had Akbar been six months in his capital, on return from Guzerat, when news of fresh outbreaks were received. Mohammad Hussain Mirza, who had left for Deccan on his defeat in the first Guzerat war, again raised his head. In co-operation with other insurgents, he got together a force of 20,000 men—Moghuls, Guzeratis, Habshi Afghans and Rajputs—with which he advanced on and occupied, Ahmedabad. His forces were continually increasing and he was secretly helped by the Raja of Idar and other Princes. Mohammed Hussain soon began to put on the airs of royalty and started coining money in his own name. He also ordered his *khutba* to be recited in the mosques.

17. The Emperor summoned his Ministers and gave directions for the outfit of an army for fresh invasion of Guzerat. The former campaign had lasted a year and the accoutrements had become largely unserviceable through wear and tear. After returning from the War, the men had not had sufficient time to replace their necessities. His Majesty, therefore, made liberal grants of money to the soldiers for procuring the materials of War.

18. A few days after the troops had been mobilised and had set-out on their march to Ahmedabad, Akbar mounted a swift she-camel (*sandni*) and started-off on the second expedition to Guzerat. By forced marches, a journey of about 800 miles was performed in but nine days.

19. Raja Rai Singhji and his brother, Rajkumar Ram Singhji, with the Bikaner military contingent, were in the expedition. The former held a 'high command.'¹ As aptly described by Col. Tod, it is sufficient to state that a Rathore prince was in the battle, to know that he would bear its brunt; and, although we are today ignorant of the actual position of our hero, we may safely assume that his post was in the van.

20. The Bikaner forces, under Raja Rai Singhji, performed great feats of valour, bravery and sacrifice in fighting with the Habshis and the Afghans who offered the toughest resistance in the battle and were, on more than one occasion, within an ace of victory. The Emperor himself charged the enemy in person like a fierce tiger.

21. Raja Rai Singhji distinguished himself personally in the assault of Ahmedabad and engaged

¹ Cf. Major K. D. Erskine's "Gazetteer of Rajputana", Vol. III-A.

Mirza Mohammed Hussain in single combat.¹ A fierce fight took place between the two strong men. Mohammed Hussain attacked Rai Singhji in many terrible forms and at last made a mighty and determined effort to smite-off the Raja's head. Rai Singhji, with the agility peculiar to Rathore warriors, warded-off the attack and dealt the Islamite a staggering blow, which brought his head down lifeless at Rai Singhji's feet.

22. The Emperor conferred the hereditary title of "Raja" on Rai Singhji in appreciation of the valuable military services rendered by his army, and the valour and intrepidity displayed by him personally on the field of battle in this war.

23. Rajkumar Ram Singhji made a name for bravery by slaying and bringing down one of the famous enemy generals from his *howdah* on the

¹ Vide Col. Tod's *Rajasthan* and Major Erskine's *Gazetteer*. According to some other historians, Mohammed Hussain Mirza was, in the first instance, captured in the battle and delivered to Rai Singhji to be kept under arrest. The Mirza was put on an elephant and was being escorted, with the honour due to his position, to the Moghul base camp, when Ikhtiyarul-mulk, one of the most influential Guzerati leaders, made a sudden attack with an army of nearly 5,000 soldiers. The Emperor ordered the drums to be beaten and Shujaat Khan and Raja Bhagwan Das were ordered to charge the enemy troops. The Mirza at this moment made a dash for liberty and was engaged in a duel by Rai Singhji, with the result described in para 21 *supra*.

elephant. In recognition of his services, Ram Singhji received a Mansab.

THE ROLL OF HONOUR.

24. The Bikaner losses in this expedition were heavy. Apart from a large number of soldiers that were killed, several Chiefs and Nobles of note had fallen. A list of the principal Bikaner heroes who, after valiantly fighting the enemy, sealed their loyalty as allies and friends of the Emperor by their own blood on the battle-field, is given below :—

Beekas—

1. Beeka Jaswant Singh, son of Arjan Singh, of Mahajan.
2. Beeka Bhagwan Singh of Bhukarka.
3. Thakur Bhupat Singh of Magrasar.
4. Thakur Jeymal Narnot of Tehandesar.
5. Beeka Bhim Raj Singh of Rajpura.
6. Beeka Sadul Singh Nimawat of Banuda.
7. Beeka Raimal of Jaitasar.
8. Beeka Gauri Singh of Hansasar.
9. Beeka Madho Singh of Parawa.
10. Beeka Amar Singh of Garhsisar.

Bidawats—

11. Beedawat Govind Dass of Bidasar.
12. Thakur Pirthi Raj of Harasar.
13. Thakur Khandar Singh of I

14. Thakur Balbhadra Singh of Sobhagdessar.
15. Thakur Chandrabhan of Ruplisar.

Kandhlots—

16. Thakur Jagat Singh Kandhlot of Rawatsar
17. Thakur Chandra Sen of Jetpur.
18. Thakur Balbhadra Sanwaldasot of Churu.
19. Thakur Askaran Kandhlot of Bhadra.
20. Thakur Sakat Singh of Sarunda.

Rupawats—

21. Thakur Dayal Dass of Bhadla.
22. Rupawat Jaimal of Bhelu.

Bhaties—

23. Bhati Saindass of Jaimalsar.
24. Bhati Sarang Deva of Beethnook.
25. Bhati Bhupat Singh of Khinasar.
26. Bhati Chandra Bhan of Kharbara.

Hazuri—

27. Bagor Ram Singh of Nal.

Sankhla—

28. Jey Singh of Panpalsar.

Darbari—

29. Maldeo Raghodasot of Bachasar.

Purohit—

30. Prohit Gopal Das son of Lakshmi Das
Sivad.

Parihar—

31. Loon Singh Sahni of Belasar.

Bachawat—

32. Bansi Dass cousin of Diwan Karam Chand
Bachawat.

Kothari and others—

33. Janjan Nibawat.
34. Kookar Chopra.
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CHAPTER IV.

EXPEDITIONS AGAINST SIROHI AND JALOR.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

On the death of Rao Man Singh Deora,¹ in 1571 A.D., as he left no heir, Surthan, a kinsman of the deceased, was selected as ruler of the State. He was opposed at first by his Minister, Bijey Singh Deora, and later on by Koli Singh, a grandson of the late Rao Jag Mal.

2. Rao Jag Mal had wedded a Mewar Princess and Koli Singh descended from that union. Rana Udai Singhji, then reigning sovereign of Udaipur, was married to a Sirohi princess.² Koli Singh, therefore, easily succeeded in enlisting the support of Rana Udai Singhji and, with the

¹ The Rulers of Sirohi are known as *Deoras* on account of their descent from Rao Pratap Singhji *alias* Deoraj, who ruled over Sirohi in the thirteenth century A.D.

² On the assassination of Rana Vikramajit of Chittaur, infant Udai Singh (posthumous son of Rana Sanga) was smuggled out of Chittaur by his nurse in a fruit basket in order to escape assassination by the imposter Rana Banbir, the faithful nurse having substituted her own son, who was murdered by Banbir in cold blood. Udai Singh was quietly removed to Komulmer where he was reared and, in course of time, married to a daughter of the late Rao of Sirohi.

assistance of an army from Udaipur,¹ he ousted Surthan and occupied the country.

3. Koli Singh, however, could not hold his acquisition for long. Soon after the Mewar forces had withdrawn, Rao Surthan secured the aid of Tej Khan, Ruler of Jalor on ceding 4 *parganas* of the Sirohi State to him. Tej Khan advanced with a force of 1,500 horse and, joined with Surthan's forces, engaged Koli Singh in a battle in which Koli Singh was defeated and killed.

4. Rana Udai Singhji at this stage approached Rai Singhji for help. He was at the time at Delhi and discussed the matter with Akbar. Now it so happened that the territories of Sirohi lay on the high road to Guzerat and the Deccan. The subjugation of this territory was thus a matter of vital importance to Akbar in the furtherance of his ambitious plans of conquest. Akbar, therefore, readily fell in with Rai Singhji's proposal to invade Sirohi and went so far as to proffer co-operation and support of the Imperial troops.

5. It may be mentioned that, in 1572 A.D., Akbar had already invaded Sirohi when, after some fighting in which the Rajputs offered a gallant

¹ The Udaipur contingent consisted of 5,000 horse. It was supplemented by detachments from Bhinai, Datina and other Rajput Chiefships.

battle, when reconciled, they became the best of friends.

9. There is, according to Col. Powlett, another version concerning the restoration of Sirohi to Rao Surthan. While the Rao was still in Bikaner, a Charan, Asu Duda by name, recited some verses in honour of Rai Singhji's victory of Sirohi, in which he made merry over a tooth of Rao Surthan that was broken by a spear-butt of Rai Singhji when the latter attacked and captured Surthan. The Raja enjoyed the composition and asked the Charan to ask for a boon. "Will it be granted," enquired the Charan? "Certainly," answered the Raja. "Then give me Surthan," said the Charan. The Raja, accordingly, released Surthan and also so passionately and eloquently pleaded his cause with the Emperor as to persuade His Majesty to restore the State of Sirohi to the Rao.¹

THE CONQUEST OF JALOR.

10. The fort of Jalor,² according to Col. Tod, was one of the nine important castles of *Marusthal*

¹ When, in 1592 A.D., Raja Rai Singhji went to Jaisalmer to marry a daughter of Rawal Har Raj, the nuptials of Rao Surthan were simultaneously celebrated with another daughter of the Rawal.

² Founded in memory of saint Jalandhar Nath, one of whose haunts is met with in the Punjab as well, where the town of Jalun-dhar commemorates his memory,—*Vide* Col. Tod.

in ancient times. On the dismemberment of the dynasty of Paramara Rajputs, the fort and the territory of Jalor passed on to the Chauhans. Rao Kanar Deva, one of the Rulers of Jalor, led a gallant army against Allauddin Khilji. His heroic defence and defeat in this war are chronicled by Farishtā. After the retirement of Allauddin, the fort was again taken possession of by the Chauhans.

11. The stronghold known as the fort of Jalor was situated on the hill of Songir. It contained many wells and two *baoris* of good water. Jalor was situated on the high road to Guzerat and occupied a key position in Akbar's schemes of conquests. The fort was strongly fortified with canons mounted on its walls and bastions and had offered at times tough resistance to the Imperial forces that had attempted to storm it.

12. In 1576, Rai Singhji was deputed to capture this fort. The hero of a hundred battles, dauntless in valour and matchless in enduring prowess—the fort and garrison of Jalor could not hold out long against his determined and persistent onslaughts: and, ere long, added another feather in his cap.

THE IMPORT OF THESE CONQUESTS.

13. By conquering Sirohi and Singhji succeeded in clearing and .. ak

the passage of the Imperial troops and other caravans the shortest high road from Delhi to Ahmedabad on the one side, and to the Deccan on the other. His enterprise was thus of considerable assistance to Akbar in the materialisation of the latter's plans of extension and consolidation of the Moghul Empire.

14. The task was difficult and perilous. Akbar and some of his ministers had at various times tried their hands at the enterprise, but apparently without any stable result. The subtle Rao Surthan, and the guileful Malik Tej Khan, generally managed to retire to their mountainous fastnesses on approach of the Moghul armies and eluded pursuit. They emerged when the invaders had withdrawn and indulged again in their favourite pastime of plundering the Imperial caravans and attacking military parties. Raja Rai Singhji, by his superior strategy and resolute determination, rounded-up and annihilated their forces and thus put an end to their outlawry.

CHAPTER V.

THE OCCUPATION OF JODHPUR.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE INVASION.

Ever since the establishment of Bikaner as a separate and totally independent kingdom and the successful assertion by Rao Bikaji of his title as head of the Elder Branch of the Rathore Houses ruling in Jodhpur and Bikaner, the relations between Bikaner and Jodhpur were strained. Although the invasion of Jodhpur on Bikaner, in 1542 A.D., was ultimately repulsed and the small part of territory temporarily sequestered by Rao Maldeoji of Jodhpur was reconquered by Raja Kalyan Singhji in 1544, the thirst for revenge surging in the heart of Rai Singhji was not quenched, particularly because the last occasion, in 1559 A.D., on which Jodhpur and Bikaner had an opportunity of measuring their swords in connection with the claims of Jaimal, son of Biramde, Ruler of Merta, did not end in a definite issue.

2. The Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, in his History of India, records that, in 1572 A.D., the territories of Jodhpur were, by means of a formal grant, presented by Emperor Akbar to Rai Singhji.

The fact of this grant is corroborated by the events cited in *Tabakat-i-Akbari* and in Major K. D. Erskine's 'Rajputana Gazetteer'.¹ Rai Singhji, however, did not make any use of the grant. His reluctance to do so may have been due to a chivalrous sentiment that, if he was to take a full and adequate revenge for the aggressions of Jodhpur against Bikaner, the occupation of Jodhpur must accrue as a result of his own exertions and conquest and not as a gift from a third party.

3. Accordingly, when Rai Singhji's hands were free from pre-occupations on behalf of Akbar, preparations were made for an attack on Jodhpur. The army was soon mobilised and started on its momentous errand. Rai Singhji led the vanguard and we can well imagine the feelings of joy that must have leapt to his heart as he, with one hand on the back of his saddle, turned half-round on his Dal Singar (war steed) and viewed his oncoming horsemen—rank on rank' of lances and spears and red-yellow banners—with trumpeters and bandmen sounding, as they advanced by measured steps, war

¹ The grant of Jodhpur State by Emperor Akbar, by means of a formal Imperial *Farman*, to Rai Singhji, is also recorded by Col. Tod, in his 'Annals of Marwar,' where Col. Tod, moreover, records that by such grant Rai Singhji was placed by the Emperor in "supremacy over his race."

marches and the bards singing the world-famous marwari martial songs.

CAPTURE OF JODHPUR.

4. Jodhpur was soon reached and attacked with a resolute determination to conquer or die on the field of battle. A fierce fighting ensued in which broad-shouldered and strong-armed soldiers of Bikaner gave grand exhibitions of their dash and dauntless valour and praiseworthily sealed their vows of loyalty by reckless shedding of blood on the battle-field. The fighting grew fiercer, bloodier and more furious when Rajkumar Ram Singhji (younger brother of Raja Rai Singhji) threw his horse into the thick of the battle and with clarion call urged, and personally led, his brave soldiers to a final clash for victory. A heavy toll in wounded and slain was exacted by each party from the other and thousands lay stretched on the battle field. The Jodhpur forces in the end gave way and retreated in confusion. The gates of the Jodhpur Fort¹ were flung open and the victorious Bikaner stalwarts rushed in and occupied the Fort and also the surrounding city.²

¹ Abul Fazl records in *Akbar Nama* that the fort of Jodhpur "is the strongest fort in that country."

² "The possession by Rai Singh of . . . mentioned by
Ferishta, Vol. II, pages 235-238 of Brigg's . . .
Side Col.

5. The cowardly murder of Jet Siji was avenged and we can easily conceive the deep sense of satisfaction, mingled with pride, that must have welled-up in the heart of Rai Singhji at this brilliant vindication of the fame, honour and prowess of the ancient House of Bikaner, as he, with bowed head, bent in thanksgiving to Shri Lakshmi Narayanji and Shri Karniji.

ITS OCCUPATION FOR FOUR YEARS.

6. Rao Chandra Sen, Ruler of Marwar, was driven away from Jodhpur and took post in Siwana¹ in the western extremity of the State.

7. It was in the course of one of the several battles fought during this period that the Bikaner troops wrested from Rao Chandra Senji the royal standards and *nagara* (kettle-drum) of Jodhpur. The latter booty, which is popularly known as "*Chandra Seni nagara*," is installed in the Bikaner Fort and is on occasions triumphantly sounded up to the present day.

Powlett's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner'. A detailed description of this invasion, and of Jodhpur's fall into the hands of Rai Singhji, is also given in Col. Powlett's Gazetteer.

¹ Rao Chander Sen's expulsion from Jodhpur is recorded in Col. Tod's "Annals of Marwar," but the fact of the capture of Jodhpur by Rai Singhji is slyly omitted and a different explanation for such expulsion is mentioned.

8. The defeat of the Jodhpur forces on this occasion was crushing and complete. Raja Rai Singhji resided in, and reigned for four¹ years consecutively, at Jodhpur.

BIKANER HOUSE: HEAD OF THE RATHORES.

9. Rao Chandra Senji in the meanwhile died and was succeeded by his elder brother, Udai Singhji.² When the acerbities and acrimonious feelings occasioned by the recent war had had time to cool down, Rai Singhji and his cousin in Jodhpur—in conformity with the well-known Rathore trait of character—again became friends.³

10. Udai Singhji, taking advantage of a suitable opportunity, one day represented to Rai Singhji : “Brother ! so long as Jodhpur remains with you, it

¹ The duration of the period of occupation is taken from Col. Powlett's "Gazetteer of Bikaner." According to one of the Jodhpur's own chronicles, Rai Singhji's occupation of Jodhpur lasted for a period of about 11 years.

² On the death of Rao Maldeo, in 1569 A.D., although Udai Singhji was the eldest surviving son, Chandra Senji, by his intrepidity and the popularity that he had acquired among the Chiefs and Nobles of the Jodhpur State, ascended the *gaddi* and ruled for a period of about 13 years. It was on Rao Chandra Senji's death that Udai Singhji ascended in 1581 A.D. The House of Bhinai was founded by Chandra Senji's eldest son, Ugra Senji.

³ It is truly said of the Rathores that, whereas they are implacable foes on the field of battle, when reconciled, they not unoften again become good friends.

is in the possession of the Rathores; but, in view of Akbar's designs regarding Marwar, it is in a high degree improbable that you will be able to retain Jodhpur permanently. We are after all brothers and *patwai*. I beg you, therefore, to grant my patrimony back to me You possess considerable influence with the Emperor. He is guided by your advice. As a further act of grace, if you condescend to help me, will you get the grant ratified by Akbar as well, so that I may be able to retain my kingdom unmolested by the Moghuls? If you do not do so, the vast Raj of Marwar conquered by our common ancestors may one day pass under the Moghul yoke. If such a calamity should happen, the result will be discreditable to you, since *you are the Head of the Rathores.*"

11. It may be mentioned that this was not the only occasion on which the fact of Bikaner being the Elder Branch of the Rathore Houses that rule Bikaner and Jodhpur, was recognized by Jodhpur. Recent investigations into the records of the Peshwas have brought to light another interesting discovery. The publication entitled, '*Jodhpur Yatheli Raj-Karnen*', being a record of despatches sent by the Maharatta envoys of the Peshwas at the Court of Jodhpur to the Peshwas (edited by Rao Bahadur D. V. Parisnis and published in Bombay in 1915), contains a

despatch, dated the 24th October 1794 A.D., from the Maharatta Envoy, Krishnaji Jagannath, to the Peshwa in which it is stated that, on the death of Maharajah Bijai Singhji of Jodhpur, in 1793 A.D., Sewai Singh Champawat, Dewan of Jodhpur, with the concurrence of the other Members of the Jodhpur Government, including principal Chiefs and Nobles of the State, and with the approval of the Peshwas, who at that time held Jodhpur as a vassal State and possessed a decisive voice in the settlement of the matter, actually wrote to Maharajah Surat Singhji of Bikaner making him a formal offer of the *gaddi* of Jodhpur on the ground of the latter being the Head of the Rathores, provided the Maharajah agreed to pay the arrears of tribute due to the Maharattas. It was on the refusal of this offer by Maharajah Surat Singhji, that Maharajah Bhim Singhji was installed on the Jodhpur *gaddi*.¹

RESTORATION OF JODHPUR TO RAO UDAI SINGH.

12. To resume the narrative, the claims of blood triumphed over sentiments of revenge and personal ambition. Rai Singhji was impressed by the eloquence of Udai Singhji's address : he restored Jodhpur to his cousin and personally installed him

¹ I am indebted to the renowned historian, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, for this piece of information.

on the throne of the State. When he visited Delhi, Rai Singhji pleaded the cause of Udai Singhji so heartily that Akbar was persuaded to not only ratify the restoration of the State, but also to confer the hereditary title of "Raja" on Udai Singhji.

THE BEST OF FRIENDS.

13. It must not be inferred from the above incident that Jodhpur and Bikaner were always at loggerheads. The fight for the Heir-looms, described on pages 8-10, was followed by fraternisation, when Rao Bikaji marched his forces, in support of Rao Sujaji, to effect the release of the latter's brother, Bar Singhji, who had been arrested by the Afghan Governor at Ajmer.

14. As once playfully remarked by Raja Bakht Singhji (of Jodhpur), the sister Houses of and Jodhpur have often been conscious of fact that one and one, when placed side by side, make, not two, but eleven. The two States have often acted in concert and the traditions of friendship and brotherly love between the two Houses happily hold fast to this day.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FORT OF BIKANER.

THE FIRST CASTLE.

Rao Bikaji, when he set out from Mandor, in A.D. 1459, on his famous expedition to conquer and establish a new dominion for himself and his descendants, first settled at Kodamdesar, 12 miles n.-w. of Bikaner. He erected a castle at this place and used it as a base for his military expeditions and augmenting his conquests.

THE OLD FORT.

2. It was in the course of one of his excursions that he halted on a rocky and raviny spot. There, in a *khair* thicket, he beheld a sheep with two lambs, which were being pursued by wolves. The mother fearlessly faced the pursuers whenever they approached to seize her young, and by her bold front kept them at a distance. The wolves were driven away by Bikaji's soldiers, but the phenomenon—which was unique—invited his attention. Seers were consulted and they pronounced the spot auspicious for the construction of a fort.

3. The foundation of the ~~fort~~ fort laid on this spot in 1485 A.D.

1488 A.D. This was the old fort, the ruins of which are still seen near the temple of Sri Lakshmi Narayanji inside the city.

THE BIKANER CITY.

4. The construction of the city of Bikaner was also commenced by Rao Bikaji a few years thereafter. The position and lay-out of the city proclaim the massive intellect and the great power of imagination of its founder. The history of the last 450 years during which period the city has, inspite of numerous storms, grown and prospered and its rise to present proportions¹ give an indication of the comprehensive conception and grand design that animated and inspired its original architect. The work was begun on *Baisakh sudi 2, Samvat 1545*² (i.e., 13th April 1488 A.D.), as is testified by the following old couplet.

पनरै सै पैतालवे, सुद वैसाख सुमेर ।

यावर बीज थरपीयो, बोकै बीकानेर ॥

“Baisakh, the month, the day the second,
fifteen four five the year,
And the sixth day of the week,
when Bika founded Bikaner.”³

¹ The present population of the Bikaner city is about 90,000.

² The event is still commemorated by the observance of this *tithi* as a public holiday.

³ Cf. Col. Powlett's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner.'

THE PRESENT FORT.

5. The site of the present fort was also indicated about the same time. It happened in this way. Early one morning Napoji and Naroji, when out for a walk, noticed a man asleep with his head resting upon a tuft of *bharut* grass which served him as a pillow. Round this tuft of grass was coiled a poisonous snake. Napoji directed that the reptile should not be disturbed or molested, but carefully watched. When the sleeper woke-up, the reptile quietly moved away and journeyed to the ground already pointed out by the incident of the wolves and sheep and wherein a fort was then already in course of construction.

6. Napoji then foretold that a larger fort would, at a future date, be constructed on the spot where the snake had first been seen. This spot was carefully marked and plans were from time to time prepared for the construction of a fort, but it was left to Rai Singhji to give a practical shape to this proposal.

7. The city of Bikaner had in the meanwhile become the centre of a large and growing trade. Wealthy merchants had settled there, making Bikaner their head-quarters with branch ramifications in other cities of the Empire,—such as Lahore,

Multan, Delhi and Agra.¹ Important trade routes radiated from, and through, Bikaner to the different parts of northern, eastern, western and central India. Its situation on the then high road from India to Sindh, Baluchistan and Afghanistan considerably added to its inter-statal and all-India importance.

8. Rai Singhji, with a clear vision surpassing that of ordinary mortals, foresaw the future possibilities and developments of the State and the strategic position of its capital. The construction of a strong fort was considered essential by him for the fulfilment of this vision. The foundation stone of the present Fort was accordingly laid on *Baisakh sudi 3, Samvat 1645* (18th April 1588 A.D.)²

9. The *sapheel* (outer wall) of the fort extends 1,218' on the north side, 1,203' on the east, 1,221' on the west and 1,209' on the south It encloses an area of 1,63,119 square yards. There is a space of 30' between the *kot* and the *parkot*. The *sapheel*, which is 57' high, was surrounded by a

¹ The cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Karachi did not then exist. The enterprising mercantile community of Bikaner has not been slow to since emigrate to, and capture, some of the commerce and trade of these important trade marts of India.

² This *tithi* is still observed as auspicious in the Bikaner State. A Darbar is held annually on this day to commemorate the event.

moat 60' wide at the top, tapering to 20' wide at the bottom, and 156' deep.¹

10. The construction of the Fort was finished in 1593 A.D. The event was solemnised by the holding of a Darbar and other festivities.

A VISION REALISED.

11. Subsequent events have amply proved the wisdom of Rai Singhji's prophetic vision. The city of Bikaner has not only become the centre of one of the most important and premier principalities of Rajputana, acknowledged as such not only from one end of India to the other but also in other parts of the World. The eminence of Bikaner has not been confined to the domain of commerce and trade alone. Through long generations, it has been the cradle of a considerable military and political power which on occasions exercised a considerable influence not only in inter-statal affairs but also in moulding the destiny of the Empire.

12. It is the proud boast of the Rulers and people of Bikaner that, ever since the consecration of the present Fort, in 1593 A.D., the State red-yellow Flag has flown constantly and uninterruptedly

¹ A considerable portion of depth and width of this moat has since been filled-up by silt.

on its ramparts and, during its long existence, the Fort has always been the seat of the Bika Rathores and that it has never been in the possession of any other power or race for a single day, nay, not even for a single second!

CHAPTER VII.

THE RE-CONQUEST OF BHATNER.

A GLIMPSE OF EARLY HISTORY.

Emperor Taimur, in his memoirs,¹ has described the fort of Bhatner as "one of the most renowned fortresses in India, and the Raja of the fort as an important person, famous throughout the whole country." The fame and glory of Bhatner excited Taimur's cupidity and, after devastating the then important town of Dipalpur, he pushed forward to Bhatner with a body of ten thousand picked cavalry.²

¹ Cf. *Maljuzat-i-Taimuri*, or autobiographical memoirs of Emperor Taimur, originally written in the Chaghatai Turki language, translated into Persian by Abu Talib Husaini, who dedicated the book to Shah Jahan. It was translated into English by Major Stewart and was published in London in 1830.

² Amir Taimur invaded India in 1408 A.D. It is said that he had an army of 1,00,000 valiant Tartar horsemen. It was, perhaps, a prophetic vision that made one of his nobles exclaim as soon as Taimur set his foot in India: "Sire, by the favour of Almighty God we may conquer India, but if we establish ourselves permanently therein, our race will degenerate and our children will become like the people of those regions, and in a few generations their strength and valour will diminish." How faithfully has the history of the Moghul Empire in India fulfilled this prophesy!

2. In regard to the fort of Bhatner, Taimur recorded: "it was an extremely strong and well-fortified place, so much so as to be renowned through out the whole of Hindusthan . No hostile army had ever penetrated thither." It was after a considerable fighting, in which the contending parties displayed great intrepidity, valiant character and fierce fighting qualities, that the fort was captured and Raja Duli Chand, then ruler of Bhatner, presented 27 Arab horses with gold mounted harness, and several sporting hawks, to Taimur. The Raja was treated with consideration and honour by the Emperor and was presented with a robe of gold brocade, a cap and girdle of gold work and a gold mounted sword.¹

BIKAJI'S TRIUMPH.

3. Such were the glorious traditions of Bhatner, on the reduction of which Rao Bikaji, soon after his migration to Kodamdesar, set his heart.

¹ It may be added that, subsequently, a large number of men, with their wives and children, were treacherously captured and made slaves. The fort was again stormed, but the garrison stood out to the last and fell fighting manfully and desperately. "In the course of one hour," writes Taimur, "the heads of 10,000 infidels were cut-off. The sword of Islam was washed in the blood of the infidels." The Taimurian army plundered the town, set fire to houses, and reduced them to ashes.

The Bhattis¹ gave a tough battle. Several hundred of them fell on the battle-field, including their chieftain who, although 80 years of age, was full of vigour and continued, till his last breath, to infuse his own enthusiasm for martial exploit among his soldiers and to unceasingly inspire and rouse them to desperate action.

MOSLEM OCCUPATION OF BHATNER.

4. It has already been recorded in Chapter I that, about 1535 A.D., Bhatner was captured by the Moghul King Kamran and, though he was defeated and forced to flee from Bikaner, the Muslims retained possession of Bhatner for a number of years.

RECOVERED BY RAI SINGHJI.

5. It was after the defeat of Rao Chander Senji of Jodhpur, in 1578, that Raja Rai Singhji turned his attention to the re-conquest of Bhatner and sent his brother Ram Singhji, at the head of a large Rajput force, to measure swords with Hayat Khan, then Muslim ruler of Bhatner.²

6. Hayat Khan was a son of Takhtah Beg Kabuli, who at first served under Mirza Mohammed

¹ Bhati is a Hindu Rajput. Bhat-ti is a Moslem convert of the same tribe—*Vide* Col. Tod.

² See Tod's 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan'.

Hakim, King of Afghanistan, and later on entered the service of Akbar and was appointed a mansabdar of 700. Hayat Khan, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, held a petty mansab himself, but it is not clear whether the mansab was acquired by him prior to, or after, this fight. In all probability, he entered the Moghul service after his defeat by Rai Singhji. It does not require a long stretch of imagination to believe that Hayat had the sympathy of other petty Muslim rulers and mansabdars, who secretly helped him, with men and money, in his war with Rai Singhji.

7. Raja Rai Singhji had a very difficult task to perform in regaining his ancestral patrimony. After a fierce battle, in which both sides suffered heavy losses, Bhatner was wrested and Hayat Khan saved his life by stealthily escaping at the dead of night to Fatehabad.

THE RATHORE CODE OF HONOUR.

8. In 1597 A.D., when Rai Singhji was on a visit to Bhatner, a father-in-law of Akbar, one Nasir Khan by name, happened to pass that way. Whilst halting in this town, Nasir Khan, who was a licentious person, outraged the modesty of the virgin daughter of a Khatri resident of the place. This violence naturally annoyed Rai Singhji, at whose

instance Nasir Khan was given a severe beating. In the course of the scuffle, Nasir Khan received serious injuries on the head.

9. Nasir Khan, on return to Delhi, took counsel with Karam Chand Bachhawat, a dismissed and traitorous Dewan of Bikaner, who had migrated to Delhi and was constantly engaged in hatching conspiracies against the Raja. Tutored and inflamed by the Bachhawat, Nasir Khan laid a highly coloured complaint before the Emperor, who demanded immediate surrender of the person that had administered the beating to his father-in-law. This demand Rai Singhji disdainfully declined to comply.

WANTON BLOODSHED.

10. It so happened that Rajkumar Dalpat Singhji, eldest son of the Raja, had about this time rebelled against his father and resorted to Delhi. In accordance with the machiavellian political principle of Akbar—*divide-et-impera*—Dalpat Singhji was given a welcome asylum at the Court. With a view to conciliate his father-in-law,¹ Akbar granted the fort and province of Bhatner to Dalpat Singhji and sent a large Moghul army with him to attack Bhatner. Bhatner was soon conquered and

¹ It is possible that Akbar may have acted in this matter under petticoat influence.

occupied by Dalpat Singhji. This happened about 1599 A.D.

11. The Bhattis and Johiyas, erstwhile rulers of Bhatner, who were kept under restraint by the strong arm of Raja Rai Singhji, now raised their heads. They were providentially helped in their enterprise by the boyish and headstrong temper of Dalpat Singh. Soon after getting possession of the fort, he displayed contumacy to the instructions of, and refused to attend, the Imperial Court. The Bhattis utilised this circumstance to their own advantage and succeeded in alienating the feelings of Akbar against Dalpat Singhji and enlisting the Emperor's sympathies in their own favour.

12. A Moghul force invested the fort once more in aid of the Bhattis and ousted Dalpat Singhji, who now repaired to Delhi and tendered apology with the result that Bhatner was again rendered to him. The Bhattis had, however, in the meanwhile gained possession of the fort and stoutly contested Dalpat Singhji's title, which he was thereupon obliged to establish and execute by the force of arms.

13. The Bhattis continued to indulge in dreams of once more ruling over Bhatner and did not give-up their efforts at a re-conquest of the place. A fresh battle for the retention of Bhatner thus seemed imminent.

FINAL RE-CONQUEST.

14. Rai Singhji had, in the meanwhile, made-up his differences with the Delhi Court over this affair. With the concurrence of Akbar, he led his gallant band of Rathores for what turned-out to be a fierce and sanguinary internecine war, which continued for several days. At length the father and the son were reconciled and Dalpat Singhji returned with his father to Bikaner.¹ Bhatner was re-annexed to the Bikaner territory.

15. In course of time, Dalpat Singhji accompanied his father to Delhi and was presented to the Emperor. His winning manners soon secured him pardon. With an initial mansab of 500,² he was sent on service to the Deccan.

DALPAT SINGH'S WAYWARDNESS.

16. Dalpat Singhji, though an exceptionally brave Prince on the field of battle, nevertheless appears to have been weak of intellect. Karam Chand Bachhawat and Prohit Manmahesh, with a few other disaffected people of the State, exercised great influence over him and led him, from day to day, into the paths of rebellion against his father.

¹ According to some historians, the reconciliation was brought about after the defeat of the father by his gallant son.

² On the death of Raja Rai Singhji, Dalpat Singhji was promoted to the *mansab* of his father, namely, a 'Commander of Five Thousand.'

17. During his stay in Bikaner, Dalpat Singhji was constantly plotting and planning against his father and getting into scrapes. Rai Singhji tried to pacify, and win over, the misguided son by grant of large territories, and even went so far as to confer the whole of the *Sarkar* of Nagore on him. These favours kept Dalpat Singh quiet for a time. He, however, broke out again, when Rai Singhji went on a visit to Nagore under the mistaken belief that the presence of his father, in his fief, threatened his position.

18. Dalpat once learnt that the Fort of Sirsa had been wrested from the Johiyas and the Bhattis by a Musalman adventurer, Ziaud-din. He immediately, without consulting his father, led an attack on Sirsa and invested the Fort. Ziaud-din was defeated and he fled by a secret passage at night. Dalpat Singhji had, however, by this time lost the good-will of the Bachhawats, who instigated Ziaud-din to lodge a malicious and highly coloured report against the Prince with the Emperor. An Imperial army soon marched on Sirsa. Dalpat, unable to stand the onslaught, repaired to Marot (Sindh). The Imperial army pursued him thither, too, and engaged him in a battle, which did not end in a definite issue. Ultimately, a fierce battle between Dalpat and the Imperial forces took place

near Bhatner, lasting several days and involving the parties in heavy losses. Dalpat Singhji was ultimately defeated and arrested.

19. Rai Singhji overlooked the delinquencies of the son in the moment of his distress and had to use all his tact and influence at the Court to bring about a reconciliation between the Emperor and Dalpat Singh as well as to persuade His Majesty to raise the siege of Bhatner and release Dalpat. The Fort and *parganah* of Sirsa passed on to Bikaner as a result of this settlement.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GLORIOUS WAR RECORD.

It has been stated elsewhere, on the authority of the Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan by Col. James Tod, that "*Raja Rae Singh led a gallant band of his Rathores in ALL the Wars of Akbar*".

2. Col. Tod, again, stated but a bare truth when, in referring to the House of Bikaner, he narrated in his 'Annals of Bikaner': "*This Family furnishes another example of the prodigal sacrifice of Rajput blood in the Imperial Service*". A few facts in substantiation of Col. Tod's aforesaid important and historic declarations have already been given. Some more instances are furnished here.

THE ATTOCK WAR.

3. When, in 1578 A.D., Rajkumar Man Singhji¹ (son of Raja Bhagwan Dassji) was in military command of the districts along the river Indus, with his Head-Quarters at Attock, the Imperial armies were pressed hard by the Pathans. Man Singhji, finding himself unable to cope with

¹ His father, Raja Bhagwan Dassji, was at that time Viceroy of the Punjnb.

the enemy, was obliged to apply to Akbar for reinforcements.

4. The^d Emperor, thereupon, asked Raja Rai Singhji to proceed in aid of the Rajkumar. Rai Singhji accordingly hurried with his famous and splendid Bikaner Cavalry and, by forced marches, covered the journey in a very short time. Man Singhji came out a long distance from his camp to meet Rai Singhji and, while even the dust of the long marches was not yet brushed, an urgent Council of War was held.

5. Next day, the combined forces of Rai Singhji and Man Singhji made a fierce attack on the Pathans, who after heavy fighting, were defeated and pursued till their columns were broken and they scattered, in confusion and disorder, in all directions. A considerable number of arms and horses were seized and the Pathan menace to the Imperial position on the Frontier of India was, for the time being, shattered.

EXPEDITION TO KABUL.

6. In 1582 A.D., Mirza Mohammed Hakim, King of Afghanistan and brother of Akbar, fell out with the Emperor. Allured by the inducements held out to him by some disaffected military commanders of the Emperor, assuring him of their armed co-operation and support, the Mirza set out

from Kabul, with the object of conquering the Punjab, and rapidly advanced to Lahore. Raja Bhagwan Dassji, Viceroy of the Punjab, and Kanwar Man Singhji, Military Commander, finding themselves unable to cope with the invading army, withdrew into the Lahore Fort. The Mirza occupied the town.

7. The Emperor, on being apprised of this invasion, marched hastily to Lahore. When the intelligence of the Emperor's march reached Mirza Mohammad Hakim, he retreated. Akbar pursued the Mirza as far as the Indus, but did not proceed further. Raja Rai Singhji and Prince Murad, were sent to effect the conquest of Kabul.

8. The invading army passed quickly through the Khyber Pass. When they came within 7 kos of Kabul, Mirza Mohammad Hakim issued forth, with a large army, and attacked the invaders. On the night before this action, Faridun (an uncle of the Mirza) had attacked the rear of the invading army, killed a good many soldiers and had carried off a considerable spoil. Rai Singhji was, therefore, in a particularly vindictive mood and, in the engagement that now ensued, he and his army wreaked terrible vengeance and exacted dire retribution.

9. The Mirza and his army suffered an ignominious defeat and were put to flight. Raja

Rai Singhji, Prince Murad and the victorious army then entered into and occupied the fort and city of Kabul. The news of the victory was communicated to the Emperor, for which he offered his thanksgiving to God and marched on to Kabul, where he stayed for a few days.

10. It was, probably, in appreciation of the valuable services rendered by Rai Singhji in this expedition that the fief of Kasur was presented to him by the Emperor.

11. On return from the Kabul expedition, and probably in view of the weakness exhibited by Bhagwan Dassji on the occasion of Mirza Mohammed Hakim's invasion, he was relieved of the Viceroyalty of the Punjab and the post was conferred on Rai Singhji. During the latter's regime, the Pathans again raised their head, when they were taught a terrible lesson. The strong action taken by Rai Singhji, on this occasion, elicited warm applause from the Emperor.

SERVICE IN BENGAL.

12. In 1582 A.D., when the Emperor was in Kabul, Bahadur Ali, an adventurer, entered and, finding the Imperial forces napping, occupied the country of Bihar. He had coins struck in his own name, caused his *khutba* to be read in

gave himself the title of King Bahadur Shah. The ingenuity and resources of Khan-i-Azam, Viceroy of Bengal, were put to a considerable strain before this upstart could be routed.

13. Hardly was this rebellion quelled when news was received of revolt of Masum Khan Kabuli, who, in concert with Tar Khan Diwana and some other insurgents, and a large number of disaffected soldiers (including some of Akbar's erst-while military officers), was giving serious trouble elsewhere in Bengal. He had defeated the Imperial forces sent against him under Khwaja Shamsud-din Khawife, took the Khwaja as prisoner, and snatched Imperial canons. Another traitor, Nur Mohammad by name, also rebelled about this time in Bengal and began to attack the Imperial caravans.

14. The rebel leaders assembled nearly 40,000 horsemen, 500 elephants and a large number of war boats and artillery. They advanced to meet the Imperial army and defeated Raja Todar Mal. Nearly all the country of Bengal and Bihar had by this time fallen into their hands.

15. Katlu Khan Afghan, an Orissa Chief, finding the whole of Bengal in commotion, raised the standard of rebellion in Orissa. Khan-i-Azam sent Sheikh Farid-i-Bukhari (a commander of 1,500) to make peace with him. Katlu personally feigned

submission, but instigated Bahadur Gauriya, a powerful *zamindar* of Bengal and a high Officer in the army of Katlu Khan, to block the Sheikh's advance and attack him. In the encounter, a large portion of the Sheikh's army was killed and a considerable quantity of Imperial arms was seized.

16. The whole of the province of Bengal (which then included Bihar, Assam and Orissa) appears at this time to have been in a state of violent agitation and ferment. Rebellions, big and small, were breaking-out here, there and everywhere. While insurrection at one place was being suppressed, tumult would burst-forth elsewhere. The Imperial authority and prestige were at a very low ebb.

17. Khan-i-Azam (a senior mansabdar of 5,000) did his best to fight the recrudescences, but as revolts and mutinous dispositions had spread over a wide front, his available army, administrative capability and financial resources were sorely tried and put to a breaking strain. In such a state of helplessness, Khan-i-Azam applied to the Emperor for assistance.

18. It was at such a critical juncture that Rai Singhji was sent with his forces to Bengal in order to co-operate with Khan-i-Azam in quelling the rebellious elements. He carried out his mission

with such consummate skill, and so well did he succeed in restoring law and order in the province that, soon after, Khan-i-Azam was able to leave Bengal with a large number of Jagirdars and subjugated rebels to wait upon the Emperor and give an account of the affairs of Bengal, 'leaving the *suba* empty'.¹ Although it is not specifically stated, it is quite probable that Rai Singhji held charge of the Viceroyalty of Bengal during Khan-i-Azam's absence.

MARCH TO BALUCHISTAN.

19. In 1585 A.D., Rai Singhji headed the Imperial expedition against the Baluchis. He had by this time acquired such a high reputation for military leadership, and for inflicting dire chastisement on rebellious Chiefs, that, on his arrival in Baluchistan, the people and their leaders soon submitted. Rai Singhji, by his tact and statesmanship, was able to persuade the two most important Baluchi Chiefs, (i) Ghazi Khan Wajhiyah and (ii) Ibrahim Khan Baluchi, to accompany him to the Imperial Court.

20. At the intercession of Rai Singhji, the Chiefs were pardoned by the Emperor and allowed

¹ *Vide Tabakat-i-Akbari.*

to retain their country as his vassals. In this expedition, Ismail Kulli Khan, a *Mansabdar* of 3,500 and brother of Khan-i-Jahan, the Prime Minister, served under the Raja.

THE SINDH WAR.

21. The territories of Bhakkar and Multan were, in 1591, granted by the Emperor to Khan-i-Khanan, in fief, with orders to effect the conquest of Sindh. When he went to take possession of the country, the people, on the incitement of Mirza Jani Beg, King of Sindh, offered strenuous opposition. It, therefore, became imperatively necessary for Khan-i-Khanan to teach Mirza Jani Beg a lesson.

22. Mirza Jani Beg advanced with a powerful force and attacked the camp of Khan-i-Khanan. A fierce fusillade announced the opening of the battle, which continued for several days. Mirza Jani Beg then withdrew to a fortified promontory, surrounded by a swamp, which could only be reached by a narrow path, and threw-up strong additional entrenchments. Khan-i-Khanan besieged the place for 2 months, during which time, the Emperor sent him money, 1,00,000 maunds of grain, with several large guns and many gunners, in order to reinforce his army.

23. The fighting continued from day to day

with heavy losses on both sides. The Sindhies had got possession of the roads, and prevented the passage of provisions. Khan-i-Khanan was, therefore, obliged to move away without achieving any decisive result.

24. Jani Beg, in the meanwhile, finding the fort of Sihwan weakly garrisoned, marched against Sihwan. Khan-i-Khanan, on coming to know of this movement, sent a strong detachment under Dalpat Singhji (son of Rai Singhji) and some other Nobles, to reinforce the Imperial garrison in Sihwan. This detachment performed the marvellous feat of marching 160 miles in two days!

25. The Imperial Forces under Dalpat Singhji and his colleagues numbered 2,000. Mirza Jani Beg had mustered more than 5,000 in the vicinity of Sihwan. Both the besieging armies were anxious to get possession of this Fort, which was considered to be the key of the country. Undauntedly, Dalpat Singhji went into the battle and, lo! the wind of victory began to blow upon the Royal Standards and Mirza Jani Beg was forced to retire.

26. When the news of reverses of the Imperial troops, under Khan-i-Khanan, reached Akbar, he sent Rai Singhji at the head of his own forces, combined with some Imperial troops, by the route of Jaisalmer, to the assistance of the Khan.

27. Soon after Rai Singhji's arrival on the scene of battle, the fortunes of war began to change. Mirza Jani Beg's army was gradually reduced in morale and equipment. Provisions and fodder were cut-off, with the result that soldiers were obliged to eat their horses and camels. The number of the enemy combatants, too, was getting rapidly diminished, as many soldiers were killed every day from fire of the Imperial guns and muskets and by Rai Singhji's gallant Rathore cavaliers.

28 Mirza Jani Beg was compelled to sue for peace and was brought to the Court of Akbar, where he sought and obtained pardon. With a mansab of 3,000, he received the *suba* of Multan in fief.

EXPEDITIONS TO THE DECCAN.

29 On the death of Hussain Nizam-ul-mulk, the sovereignty of the Nizam-ul-mulki kingdom (which at the time comprised the greater portion of the South Indian Peninsula) passed on to his eldest son, Murtaza Nizamul-mulk. But he was soon dispossessed by his younger brother, Burhan-ul-mulk. Burhan held Ahmednagar with the support of the Moghul army and Akbar naturally expected that he would show his gratitude and fidelity by sending suitable tributes. In the intoxication of his

and power, Burhan, however, forgot the many and great favours that he had received from the Emperor and tried to assert his independence. Akbar's expostulations and advice made no impression on him. An Imperial army, consisting of 70,000 horse together with a considerable infantry and artillery, was accordingly despatched to the Deccan, in 1593, under the command of Prince Murad, Raja Rai Singhji and Khan-i-Khanan¹. Burhan, in the meantime, died and was succeeded by his son, Ibrahim.

30. Dissensions grew-up between Prince Murad and Khan-i-Khanan in connection with the disposition of troops and the attendance of their commanders. The Khan consequently adopted an attitude of aloofness from the conduct of the military operations. A state of chaos and confusion prevailed in the invading army.

31. Chand Bibi, sister of Burhan, on being informed of the dissensions in the camp of the assailants, made great preparations for resistance. The defenders fought bravely and the assailants were repelled with heavy loss.

32. The news of this reverse caused consternation in the Moghul camp. Reinforcements were obtained. The fort of Ahmednagar was again

¹ Many other mansabdars also accompanied the expedition as assistant commanders.

stormed. Its walls and bastions were blown-up, with mines laid by the Imperial troops, and the assailants rushed through the breach. After a furious fight, in which the defenders exhibited their loyalty to Chand Bibi by making a valiant stand and suffering heavy loss of life, the fort was captured. Valuable jewels, embossed arms, fine-silks, large quantities of guns and ammunition and a splendid library were among the booty captured.

33. Rai Singhji fought bravely and displayed considerable military skill in commanding the Imperial Forces and in blowing-up the fort. In the midst of the differences that had arisen in the Imperial camp, the main responsibility for the direction of the operations, it may safely be assumed, fell on Rai Singhji.

34. The Imperial army returned to Agra soon after the conquest of Ahmednagar. Rai Singhji's war-strategy and heroism won Akbar's warm approbation and the Raja's association with the Deccan continued till his death in 1612 A.D.

35. We find him again in the Deccan in 1595. There is indeed an Imperial *Farman*, dated February 1595 A.D., in the Bikaner Fort library, in which Akbar has addressed Raja Rai Singhji in such distinguished terms as "the Pillar of the Realm, the Prop of the Empire".

Royal Favours and Obligations". After expressing personal concern about the health of Rai Singhji and offering to send a physician for his treatment, if necessary, His Majesty urged the Raja to proceed at once to the Deccan where troubles had again broken out.

VICEROY OF KHANDESH (DECCAN).¹

36. Rai Singhji soon set-out with his son, Rajkumar Sur Singhji, for the Deccan and, after the military operations were over, he was appointed as Viceroy of the vast province of Khandesh, which then comprised most of the Central India and a portion of the Deccan, with head-quarters at Burhanpur, where he governed successfully for a period of about seven years.

37. In 1605, he visited Delhi at the death of Akbar. On this occasion, he rendered such important and valuable services to the Imperial family in straightening out, and smoothening, the tangle around the question of succession that, in appreciation thereof, the Viceroyalty of Khandesh was again conferred on him.

38. The position in the Deccan was so critical that Rai Singhji had to proceed, direct

¹ Further particulars regarding the Viceroyalties held by Rai Singhji are given in Chapter X, pp. 113-16.

from Delhi, to Khandesh, where he continued to discharge the responsible duties of his high office with tact and ability, until his death in harness, at Burhanpur, in 1612 A.D.

CONQUEST OF SIWANA.

39. Siwana was a famous fortress in the Province of Ajmer and was at the time in possession of Rao Chandra Senji of Jodhpur. In 1574 A.D., Raja Rai Singhji, together with Shah Kulli Khan Mahram (a commander of 3,500) were deputed to reduce and capture this fort. The heavy strain to which the horses and the army of the Raja had been subjected during the previous four or five years, by having been continuously on the field service, and the want of grain and provender due to famine conditions, rendered the task of capturing the fort at first difficult, necessitating the despatch of reinforcements from Agra, which co-operated with Rai Singhji in laying siege to Siwana.¹

40. The fort was re-invested. It was occupied by a strong body of hostile and well-armed Rajputs, who refused the summons to surrender. Rai Singhji's brave soldiery had, therefore, to set about the siege in grim earnest and stormed the fort so vigorously and boldly that the beleaguered garrison,

¹ *Vide Akbar Namah.*

after a brave defence in which they suffered heavy casualties, had to capitulate. 6

GWALIOR.

41. In 1602 A.D., we find Rai Singhji at Antri, in the Gwalior territories, with a force of 2,000 horse, engaged in reducing the turbulent elements and in restoring peace and order in that territory.¹

THE UDAIPUR WARS.

42. In pursuance of his machiavellian principles, Akbar was anxious to mainly employ Rajput troops in his efforts at the conquest of the territories of Mewar and the defeat of Rana Pratap.² The Raja

¹ Abul Fazl, who had for long adorned a niche of high consideration in the heart of His Majesty, fell into disgrace, having committed the indiscretion of reporting some of the youthful follies of Prince Jahangir. This imprudence so much exasperated Akbar that he directed Abul Fazl to make over his command to his son, Abul Rahman,—a demand which was not agreeable to Abdul Fazl. He left the Court and repaired to Gwalior, where an ambuscade was laid by Bar Singh Deo Bundela, a friend of Jahangir, in which Abul Fazl was captured and slain. Abul Fazl's followers apprized him of the danger and recommended him to retire, for protection, to Rai Singhji, who was at Antri, but the advice was unheeded.—*Vide Takmil-i-Akbarnama*, by Sheikh Inayat-ulla.

² This view is held by other historians as well. For instance, Col. Tod states in his 'Annals of Mewar': "The wily Moghul arrayed against Pertap, his kindred in faith as well as blood. The princes of Marwar, Amber . and even Boondi, late his firm ally, took part with Akbar . Nay, even his own brother, Sagarji deserted

of Amber, who by his alliance with the Emperor had been relieved of an inconvenient vassalage to Udaipur, readily volunteered his services for this enterprise. Rai Singhji was, however, reluctant to use his sword against a sister Rajput State for the glory of Islam; and, as far as possible, he kept out of the turmoil.

43. In 1576 A.D., Rai Singhji was placed in command of the Imperial Military base at Nadol (then an important Fort in the territories of Udaipur, but now situated in the Jodhpur State). The Imperial forces were quartered at this place in order to bring the hostile rebels in that part of the country to subjection and to prevent the Rana of Udaipur from conducting depredations into the Imperial territories.

44. Rai Singhji discharged his responsible duties with consummate skill and considerable credit, and succeeded in establishing peace and order within the territories entrusted to his care. While it is no doubt true that Rai Singhji's prestige and military achievements acted as a deterrant and kept Udaipur's aggressive propensities under check, it

him. But the magnitude of the peril confirmed the fortitude of Pertap, who vowed, in the words of the bard, 'to make his mother's milk resplendent'; and he amply redeemed his pledge."

The famous Mahabat Khan was an apostate " "

speaks volumes of Rana Pratap's robust common-sense and consideration for Rai Singhji's delicate feelings that, throughout the period of his command, Pratap scrupulously abstained from entering the tract of country in his charge and thus avoided a conflict with the Raja.

45. In 1603 A.D., Rai Singhji was deputed to accompany Prince Salim (later on, Emperor Jahangir) in the expedition against Udaipur; but, as the young Prince had no heart in the enterprise, the movement did not take any practical shape. Salim reported to the Emperor that, in view of the difficult country in which the operations would have to be carried out, and the facility with which the Rana could retire to his impregnable and unapproachable mountainous fastnesses, increased forces and treasures were necessary. The Emperor, who was now in failing health, was unwilling to comply with the demand. The army was thereupon directed to proceed to Allahabad and was employed for the purpose of restoring peace and order in Bihar and Bengal.

CHAPTER IX.

BIKANER POSSESSIONS AND MILITARY FORCES.

THE BIKANER STATE PROPER.

Col. Powlett, in his Gazetteer of Bikaner, states: "Rai Singh, in fact, held not only the present territory of the Bikaner State, with perhaps a few villages of Jodhpur and the British districts of Hissar and Sirsa, but a fine Jagir in Gujarat and about Surat." This description is rather vague and does not tally in its details with the contemporaneous historical records, particularly, the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

2. The *Ain-i-Akbari* is in the nature of a diary of Akbar's reign, composed from year to year, from 1556 A.D. to 1600 A.D., in the life time of Akbar, by His Majesty's famous Prime Minister, Sheikh Abul Fazl Allami, and represents information gathered by him not only from the Government records but also from personal observations and investigations. According to Prof. Gladwin, the *Ain* is the most authentic record of the regulations for the Government of Hindusthan in the reign of Akbar. It may thus be relied upon to normally contain a correct description of th

affairs at the time. Viewed from this standpoint, we would probably be on quite safe grounds in accepting the description given in this book in preference to the somewhat cryptic information embodied, in this connection, in Col. Powlett's Gazetteer.

3. A definite and precise geographical description of the territories of the Bikaner State, in the reign of Akbar, is given in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and is reproduced here *in extenso*. Explanatory matter, in order to elucidate the position with reference to the present conditions, is inserted within brackets, where necessary :

“*Sarkar of Bikaner, containing 11 Mahals. Revenue 47,50,000 dams.*”¹

ARMY :

Cavalry—12,000.

Infantry—50,000.

MAHALS :

1. *Bikampur (now in Jaisalmer State).*
2. *Barsalpur (now in Jaisalmer State).*
3. *Bikaner.*
4. *Jaisalmer.*
5. *Baharmel (Baharmer, now in Jodhpur State).*

¹ 40 dams make one rupee.

6. *Pokāl (Pugal, in Bikaner State).*
7. *Bārkal (Parkar, in Sindh).¹*
8. *Pokharan (now in Jodhpur State).*
9. *Chaulan.*
10. *Kotra (now in Jodhpur State).*
11. *Dewadar (Derawar, Bahawalpur State).²*

4. It will thus appear that the territories of the Bikaner State proper, in the reign of Rai Singhji, extended far beyond the present boundaries of the State. It is roughly estimated that the territories described above covered an approximate area of 40,000 square miles.

THE SARKAR OF NAGORE.³

5. The possession of the province of Nagore by Rai Singhji is mentioned by more than one independent historian, old as well as modern. Col. Tod has stated, in his "*Annals of Marwar*", that, in 1561 A.D., Akbar invaded Marwar and laid siege to Merta, which he took after an obstinate and sanguinary defence. "The important castle of Nagore was also captured" by Rai Singh about the

¹ In the Rajputana Gazetteer, Vol. III-A, Major K. D. Erskine has mentioned that Rao Bikaji wrested some territory from the Baluchis in Sindh.

² *Vide* H. S. Jarrett's translation of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, pp. 277-78.

³ Some particulars about this territory have already been given in Chapter II, pp. 21—25.

same time. "Both these strongholds (i.e. Merta¹ and Nagore)," continues Col. Tod, "and their lands were conferred by Akbar on Rai Singh, Prince of Bikaner, now established in independence of the parent State, Jodhpur."

6. Col. Powlett, in his "Gazetteer of Bikaner", has stated that the first service on which Rai Singhji was employed was an expedition against the Khan at Nagore. In recording the events connected with the fall of Jodhpur into the hands of Rai Singhji, his occupation of Jodhpur for some years, and the subsequent restoration of that State, in 1582 A.D., to Rao Udai Singhji, Col. Powlett mentions: "Rai Singh, however, retained the *pargana* of Nagore which had been long detached from Jodhpur, and which, as related already, Rai Singh had taken from a Musalman."

7. Major K. D. Erskine, in his "Gazetteer of Rajputana", confirms that Nagore formed a part of the Bikaner State in the reign of Rai Singhji. He does not, however, mention the date of its acquisition.

¹ The grant of Merta to Rai Singhji is not borne out either by the local chronicles or by any other historical evidence. According to the *Akbar Nama* and Mr. Smith's *Akbar*, Merta was in the possession of Mirza Sharafud-din Hussain in 1562.

8. There is an Imperial *Farman*, in the archives of the Bikaner State Library, issued by Emperor Akbar, dated the 15th October 1600 A.D., conferring the *Mahals* of the *Sarkar* of Nagore upon Rai Singhji, "the Trusted of the Empire, the Pillar of the exalted Realm, Deserving of Kindness, Consideration and Obligations;" and directing that "the Governor, the fief-holders, the Comptrollers of the Diwani affairs (namely, revenue administration) and Commissioners of the Imperial Customs duties, should hand over those *Mahals* to his (i.e., Rai Singhji's) agents." . "The chaudhries, the revenue collectors, the cultivators and all other inhabitants of these *Mahals*" were similarly directed to punctually pay the terminal taxes, the annual revenue and other diwani obligations to his agents and to recognize the Raja as their sire.

9. The aforesaid recital of the available data lends colour to two hypotheses,—namely, (i), that Nagore came into immediate possession of Rai Singhji when he defeated Haji Khan in or about the year 1561 A.D., but that it temporarily slipped out of his hands soon after;¹ or, (ii), that Nagore

¹ It is specifically stated in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that Nagore was, in 1562, under the Governorship of Mirza Sherafud-din Hussain; in 1563 or 1564 in the *tayyul* of Khani-i-Jahan, Hussain Kulli Khan; and, in 1572 A.D., in the *tayyul* (fief) of Khan-i-Kalan.

was for the first time conferred upon Rai Singhji in 1600 A.D.

10. Neither of these hypotheses, however, is in accord with the circumstantial evidence found in the contemporaneous historical records. That Nagore was captured by Rai Singhji in or about 1561 A.D. is fairly certain. His expedition against Haji Khan was, however, in all probability, led at the behest, and on behalf, of the Emperor, as an Imperial enterprise, and the territories were handed over by Rai Singhji to Akbar after conquest.

11. In our opinion, the *Sarkar* of Nagore was conferred upon Rai Singhji, in appreciation of the eminent military services rendered by him in the first and second Guzerat Wars, somewhere about 1573 A.D. The Imperial *Farman*, dated the 15th October 1600 A.D., is, in these circumstances, in the nature of the confirmation of a fact already established and enforced. The *Farman* may have been issued to avoid the possibility of doubt, or to obviate subsequent disputes, which could have well arisen in those troublesome times, when territories were not unoften in a state of flux.

12. Whatever the actual fact as regards the date on which the province of Nagore came into the possession of Rai Singhji may be, there is no

doubt that this province remained in the possession of Rai Singh and his descendants for a considerable number of years. It was in the subsequent redistribution of territories, and the inter-statal settlement arrived at between the Houses of Bikaner and Jodhpur, as a result first of internecine warfare and then of friendly fraternization, that Nagore was restored to, and again became a part of the territories of, the Jodhpur State.

13. The *Sarkar* of Nagore, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, consisted of 31 Mahals and had a revenue of 4,03,98,830 *dams*,¹ or Rs. 10,00,000, per year. The names of the Mahals comprised in the *Sarkar* of Nagore were: Amarsar-nain, Indanah, Bhadanah, Baldu, Batudha, Barodah, Barah Kain, Jael, Jarodah, Jakhrah (surrounded by a waste of sand), Kharij Khattu (this place had a stone fort, and a quarry of white marble), Deedwanah (this place had a brick fort), DUNPUR, Rewasa, Ron, Rasulpur, Rahot, Sadelah, Fatehpur Jahnjhun (it had a stone fort), Kasli, Khaelah, Kojurah, Kolehah, Kumhari, Kheran, Ladno, Meratha, (*i.e.*, Merta, which had a stone fort), Manoharnagar, Nokha, Nagarwath (sub. dist., had a brick fort).

¹ In addition to this *Khalsa* revenue, *suyarghal* or *sasan* grants worth 2,89,720 *dams* were also attached to the territories of Nagore.

SORATH AND JUNAGADH (KATHIAWAR).

14. The province of Sorath, including Junagadh, was an independent territory situated in the Kathiawar peninsula and consisted of 73 *Mahals*, including 13 sea ports, divided into 9 major divisions. It had an annual *Khalsa* revenue of 6,34,37,366 *dams*, or Rs. 15,85,934. The average income from import and export customs duties, at the 13 sea ports of the *Sarkar* of Sorath, amounted to an additional sum of about Rs. 1,20,000 per year.

15. The *Sarkar* of Sorath at this time embraced the major portion of the peninsula of Kathiawar. It included most of the territories now comprising the States of Junagadh, Nawanagar, Bhavnagar, Porbander, Morvi, Gondal, Lathi, Jasdan and the Baroda State territories of Amreli, Dhari and Okhamandal.

16. The exact date of the original grant has not yet been traced, but it appears from an Imperial *Farman* that the grant was renewed and reconfirmed in February 1597 A.D. "The Comptrollers of the affairs in the Guzerat province and the Jagirdars of Sorath" were specifically ordered by the Emperor to hand over the territories to the officers of Raja Rai Singh. The agricultural tenants in that area were also directed to obey the Raja and to pay the revenues and other obligations to him.

17. Abul Fazl, in the geographical description of India embodied in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, observes that "the *Sarkar* of Sorath¹ was an independent territory, having a Force of 50,000 Cavalry and 1,00,000 Infantry, the ruling tribe being *Ghelot*". It, therefore, appears that Akbar was not perhaps able to finally and completely conquer this province. It is not at all improbable that Rai Singhji had to do some fighting on his own account, independently of the Moghuls, in order to bring this province under proper subjection and establish his rule therein.

18. He had very good incentive to do so. For, according to the *Mirat-i-Ahmedi* and the investigations recently conducted by Mr. Sambhu-prasad Harprasad Desai, based on an inductive inquiry into the old inscriptions found in the Junagadh State, it is evident that the Rathores had over-run the peninsula of Kathiawar by 1225 A.D. In 1245 A.D., we find them enthroned in the full panoply of bright and magnificent royalty at Patan. The memory of the old Rathore rule in this province must have acted as a spurring stimulus to Rai Singhji in measuring swords with the *Ghelots* and re-establishing the Rathore rule.

¹ Sorath was the *prakritised* form of Surashtra, under which name Kathiawar was known to the Greeks and the Romans.

NADIAD, GUZERAT.

19. The *Khalsa pargana* of Nadiad, in Guzerat, was granted by Akbar to Rai Singhji, "the Pillar of the Empire, Perfect in Sincerity and Faith," by an Imperial *Farman*, dated the 14th April 1596 A.D., in exchange for the *parganas* of Tahara (Tahirpur, in Bengal ?), Kasur (near Lahore) and Atgarh (in the *Sarkar* of Cuttack),¹ that were previously held by the Raja.

20. The *pargana* of Nadiad had an agricultural area of 2,02,062 bighas and an annual *Khalsa* revenue of 81,03,098 *dams*, or Rs. 2,02,580.

21. The exchange of territories was probably actuated by considerations of administrative convenience. Nadiad could be easily administered from Sorath, which at the time comprised the most profitable territory in the possession of Rai Singhji.

SHAMSHABAD, NEAR KANAUJ, IN U. P.

22. The district of Shamshabad, including the sub-district of Nurpur, was granted by the Emperor to Rai Singhji by an Imperial *Farman*, dated the 31st May 1604 A.D. Nurpur was situated on the East bank of the Ganges and Shamshabad

¹ In the reign of Akbar, Athgarh was a *parganah* in Orissa, possessing a strong Fort, inhabited mainly by Brahmans. It was garrisoned by a Military Force of 7,000 Infantry and 200 cavalry.

on the opposite bank. The *Farman* recites that both these *Mahals*³ had, in the past, been always in the possession of the Rathores. They were granted to the Raja, "the Cream of his Equals and Peers" amongst the Rajput princes, in recognition of his eminent services to the Empire.

23. "The honourable Governor, the Dewan, the fief-holders and the Comptrollers of the Civil Affairs" were directed, according to this *Farman*, to record this grant in perpetuity in the Government registers, in favour of Rai Singhji, and not to permit any alterations to be made thereto. "The Chaudhries, the Revenue Collectors, the headmen, and the tenants of that place, acting upon the Royal Order and in obedience to the exalted Mandate", were likewise directed to pay the revenues to the Raja.

24. It appears from the *Ain-i-Akbari* that the district of Shamshabad, which had a fort on the bank of the Ganges, was included in the *Sarkar* of Kanauj. The Rathores constituted the principal population of the district, which had an agricultural area of 7,18,577 bighas and a revenue of 71,38,453 *dams* or Rs. 1,78,461.

25. Shamshabad was associated with Raja Jaichand and the earlier Rathore Rulers of Kanauj. It is a pity that this ancient heir-loom and monument

of Rathore greatness and glory was again allowed to slip-out of the hands of the seniorst Rathore Ruling House in the whole of India.¹

HISSAR, BHAINGIWAL, PUNIYAN, etc.

26. The possession of Hissar by Rai Singhji is mentioned in Col. Powlett's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner' and also in other histories. The province of Hissar, in the reign of Akbar, consisted of 27 *Mahals*, out of which 7 were included in and formed part of the Bikaner State.

27. The *pargana* of Hissar comprised of two sub-districts and had two forts, one of stone and the other of bricks. The area of culturable land consisted of 1,76,512 *bighas* and the *Khalsa* revenue was 40,39,895 *dams*, or Rs. 1,00,997, per year.

28. The other 6 *parganas* of this province in the possession of the Bikaner State (namely, Bhaingiwai, Puniyan, Barwa, Seoran, Bhatu and Sewani), yielded a *Khalsa* revenue of 39,81,710 *dams*, or about Rs. 1,00,000, per year.

PHALAUDI, SIRSA AND HANSI.

29. Major Erskine, in his 'Gazetteer of the Bikaner State', in describing the territory held by Raja Sur Singhji, has stated that Phalaudi, Sirsa¹

¹ Col. Powlett, too, has mentioned Sirsa as a part of the Bikaner territory in the reign of Rai Singhji.

and Hansi even then formed part of the Bikaner State, though¹ the State did not then comprise so much territory² as it did in the reign of Rai Singhji.

30. The *pargana* of Sirsa comprised an agricultural area of 2,58,355 *bighas* and yielded a *Khalsa* revenue of 43,61,368 *dams*, or Rs. 1,09,000, per year. A dispute about the boundary line in Sirsa district between Bikaner and the Imperial territory arose about the time of Rai Singhji's death. It was satisfactorily settled, in 1614 A.D., by Raja Sur Singhji.²

31. Hansi was, in those days, a flourishing city with a pucca fort. It was particularly noted as the resting place of the saint Jamal, successor of Shaikh Farid-i-Shakarganj, and was a more important district than either Hissar or Sirsa. It yielded a revenue of 54,34,438 *dams*, or about Rs. 1,36,000, per year.

32. The fort and territory of Phalaudi were wrested by Bikaner from the Jodhpur State. The revenue was not much, but in those days, the fort of Phalaudi, which was strongly built, possessed a great strategic value. It has since reverted to Jodhpur.

¹ This settlement of the boundary dispute was by Imperial *Farman*, No. 24, dated the 25th March 1614 A

MAROT.

33. The possession of Marot, near Multan, by Rai Singhji is mentioned in Powlett's Gazetteer. Marot was, at that time, largely inhabited by Bhattis. It had a revenue of 2,04,000 *dams* and was included in the *Sarkar* "Birun-i-Panjnad", i.e., beyond the five rivers of the Punjab.

34. Marot is now included in the territories of the Bahawalpur State.

DIPALPUR LAKHI.

35. Dipalpur Lakhi was conquered by Rao Bikaji and it formed part of the Bikaner territory even before Babar set his foot on the soil of India. Its possession in the reign of Rai Singhji is evidenced by an Imperial *Farman* dated the 3rd July 1585 A.D.

36. The *pargana* of Dipalpur Lakhi was inhabited mainly by Jats and Bhattis and it had a big Fort. The area of agriculturable land was 2,42,344 *bighas* and the annual revenue amounted to 1,35,14,059 *dams*, or Rs. 3,37,850.

BIKANER MILITARY FORCES :

Cavalry—12,000.

Infantry—50,000.

37. It has already been stated, on the testimony of no less a reliable authority than the

Ain-i-Akbari, that the State of Bikaner, in the reign of Rai Singhji, was scheduled to hold a Military Force of 12,000 Cavalry and 50,000 Infantry. It is obvious that such a large army could not be maintained out of the revenues of the State proper.

38. The Imperial grants of territories, while they, on the one hand, expressed Akbar's appreciation of the eminent military services rendered by Rai Singhji, were, on the other, also intended to defray the cost of the large military forces, which Rai Singhji maintained for Imperial requirements and the Empire's defence.

39. The existence of such a large military force also gives an insight into the importance of, and the exalted position held by, this Flower of the Rathore race in the Councils of the Moghul Empire and his domineering influence in the inter-statal affairs of the time. It, moreover, indicates that the State of Bikaner was not only prosperous and happy, but that it was also strong enough in military strength and discipline to challenge and accept war with the most powerful contemporaneous States in the Empire.

CHAPTER X.

THE VICEROYALTIES.

THE MANSABDARS.

In the reigns of the Moghul Emperors, the rank and importance of the Ruling Princes at the Imperial Court was largely determined by the seniority of the Mansabs held by them.

2. In the list of Mansabdars, which is aptly described by Col. Powlett as "the Peerage of Empire", Raja Rai Singhji of Bikaner ranked far above most of the Indian Princes. In fact, "no Hindus except the three Amer Kachhwahas—Bihari Mal, Bhagwan Das and Man Singh—father, son and grandson, were above him, and while his Mansab varied from Four Thousand to Five Thousand, the Hindu next below him was a Mansabdar of but Three Thousand."¹

3. Col. Powlett's statement is borne out by Abul Fazal's *Ain-i-Akbari*, where a full list of the

¹ As a matter of fact, the next highest Hindu Prince (namely, Raja Ram Chand Baghelah of Bandhu) enjoyed a Mansab of 2,000 only, and not of 3,000.

Mansabdars is given. The following extracts are quoted from that list :¹

I.—*Commander of Ten Thousand.*

- (1) Shahzada Sultan Salim, eldest son of His Majesty.

II.—*Commander of Eight Thousand.*

- (2) Shahzada Sultan Murad, second son of His Majesty.

III.—*Commander of Seven Thousand.*

- (3) Shahzada Sultan Daniyal, third son of His Majesty.

IV.—*Commanders of Five Thousand.*

- (4) Sultan Khusrau, eldest son of Prince Salim (Jahangir).
(23) Rajah Bihari Mal of Amber (now known as Jaipur).
(27) Rajah Bhagwan Dass, son of Raja Bihari Mal, of Amber.
(30) Rajkumar Man Singh, son of Raja Bhagwan Das, of Amber.

¹ The names of the Mansabdars that were in the regular service of the Emperor, and other persons that are not relevant for the purpose of this discussion, have been omitted.

MANSABDAR OF FIVE THOUSAND.

7. Emperor Jahangir records in his memoirs that, in view of his position as "one of the most considerable of the Rajput Amirs", Raja Rai Singh was raised to the high dignity of a Mansabdar of Five Thousand at the great feast held in honour of the first anniversary of his auspicious accession to the Throne.

DIGNIFIED STATUS OF SENIOR MANSABDARS.

8. Mr. Stuart Elphinstone has stated in his 'History of India' that Akbar himself appointed the senior Mansabdars and "none but the King's sons held a rank above the command of Five Thousand."¹

9. To quote Elphinstone again, "the Mansabdars were very liberally paid". A fair idea of the respectability and exalted status of the Mansabdars may be gathered from the salaries attached to these appointments and the establishment provided for, and maintained by, the Mansabdars. The detailed particulars concerning the

¹ According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, too, "all commands above Five Thousand" were reserved by Akbar for "his august sons." This practice was, however, changed in the reigns of the subsequent Moghul monarchs.

Mansabs of Four Thousand and Five Thousand are given below :'

<u>Monthly Pay.</u>	<u>Mansabdars of Five Thousand.</u>	<u>Mansabdars of Four Thousand.</u>
First Grade	... Rs. 30,000	Rs. 22,000
Second Grade	... ,, 29,000	,, 21,800
Third Grade	... ,, 28,000	,, 21,600

ESTABLISHMENT :

Horses—

Iraki	...	34	27
Mujannas	...	34	27
Turki	...	68	54
Yabu	...	68	54
Tazi	...	68	54
Country born	...	68	54
		<hr/> 340	<hr/> 270

Elephants—

Shergir	...	20	16
Sadah	...	30	25
Manjholah	...	20	18
Karhah	...	20	15
Phandurkiya	...	10	6
		<hr/> 100	<hr/> 80

Beasts of burden and carts—

Camels	...	80	65
Mules	...	20	17
Carts	...	160	130

MILITARY FORCES OF THE EMPIRE.

10. The military contingents supplied by the Mansabdars, according to the *Ain*, formed the greater part of the fighting force of the Empire. The contingents were mustered at stated times in the Imperial capital, or in the provincial capitals, and their salaries were paid from the Government treasuries. Such muster was necessary in the case of the Mansabdars who were servants of the Crown. It was not required in the case of the forces maintained by the large territorial magnates, such as Raja Rai Singhji, who had their own domains (supplemented by territories granted by the Emperor) to govern and from the revenues of which the expenses of the Imperial service troops, and the establishment enumerated in para 9 above, maintained by them, were defrayed.

POSITION OF THE RULING PRINCES.

11. The relative position of the Mohammedan officers, who filled-up most of the positions of Mansabdars, and the Ruling Princes needs some

elucidation. As described by Major-General Sir W. H. Sleeman, in his "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official", the highest Mohammedan officers of the Empire had not an acre more of land than they required for their residences and pleasure resorts. They had nothing but their official emoluments to depend upon and were wholtime servants of the Crown.

12. The Hindu Ruling Princes of the military class had hereditary territorial possessions and were independent rulers within their own territories. The acceptance of Mansabs by them partook of the character of military assistance rendered by them in the event of war in the capacity of allies and friends. The Ruling Princes stood in a class by themselves, superior to and quite distinct from the bulk of the Muslim Mansabdars.

VICEROYALTIES HELD BY RAI SINGHI.

13. The *Ain-i-Akbari* records that great care was taken by the Emperor in making appointments to the Viceroyalties, which were conferred on persons of exalted character and outstanding merit, in whose integrity and administrative capacity the Emperor had full confidence.¹

¹ The nomenclature used in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, in regard to this appointment, is "Sooba" and "Soobadar". Professor F.

14. It was not only on the fields of battle that Rai Singhji rendered valuable services to the Moghul Emperors and attained glory, but, as in times of War so also in times of Peace, he always co-operated with the Imperial Government as a faithful ally and sincere friend.¹ Both Akbar and his son Jahangir fully realised the value of such co-operation and recognised its importance by conferring the exalted appointment of Viceroy on Rai Singhji on at least three different occasions, as undernoted:²

in his translation of the *Ain*, states: "The Empire (including the kingdoms of Afghanistan and Baluchistan) was then parcelled into twelve grand Divisions, and each was committed to the Government of a Soobadar or Viceroy. Soobah is properly the Viceroyalty and Soobahdar the Viceroy."

¹ The traditions of unswerving loyalty and steadfast friendship have been handed down in the House of Bikaner, from generation to generation, throughout the ages. The British Government realised the value of such plighted troth by recognizing the Absolute Rulership of the Maharajahs of Bikaner, within their own Dominions, and by entering, in 1818 A.D., into a Treaty of "Perpetual Friendship, Alliance and Unity of Interests."

His Highness the present Maharajah of Bikaner has further cemented this connection by trying, in the words of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, "to stand First in the Service of the Empire."

² Altogether about 17 appointments of Viceroys and Governors were at various times held by the Rulers of Bikaner in the Moghul period. They not unoften involved the exercise of high statesmanship and administrative capacity in dealing with the difficult and dangerous situations that must have been common in those days of unstable government.

<u>Years.</u>	<u>Province.</u>	<u>Emperor by whom appointed</u>
1582	Runjab ¹	Akbar.
1585-1592	Central India, and a portion of the Deccan, then known as the Soobah of Khandesh, with Head-Quarters at Burhanpur. ²	Akbar.
1605-1612	Soobah of Khandesh, with Head-Quarters at Burhanpur. ³	Jahangir.

15. Khandesh, in the reign of Akbar, comprised, in terms of modern geography, the greater part of Malwa (Central India and south-east Rajputana), Central Provinces and the Eastern Guzerat. It was inhabited by rebellious tribes and its boundaries touched the powerful independent Moslem Kingdoms of Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmednagar, where plots for overthrowing the Empire of Akbar and Jahangir were frequently being hatched. It was a veritable match-box of the Moghul Empire. The appointment of Rai Singhji as Viceroy of this important Province, on two

¹ Cf. *Umrai Hanood*.

² Col. Powlett's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner'.

³ Col. Powlett's 'Gazetteer of Bikaner'.

occasions, denotes the high degree of confidence reposed by both Akbar and Jahangir in his integrity, friendly loyalty and ability to cope with the internal disturbances and smash the enemy combinations.

16. The frequent inroads from lawless and turbulent border tribes required in the province of Punjab an exceptionally strong administrator, like Rai Singhji, to maintain quiet on the border and establish peace and order within. It was due, probably, to the initiative of Rai Singhji that the fortifications and citadel of Lahore were particularly strengthened and re-built.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VICEROYS.

17. Detailed instructions were issued by the Emperor to the Viceroys on their appointments, somewhat on the lines of the Instrument of Instructions issued now-a-days by His Majesty the King-Emperor to every new Viceroy of India. The Instrument of Instructions, issued by Akbar, stated *inter alia* that the Viceroy was His Majesty's Vicegerent. The troops and subjects of the Province were under his orders. He was reminded that the prosperity of the people of the province depended upon his impartial administration of justice. In all his actions he was expected to strive to please God, to whose Divine Throne it was his

duty to incessantly offer supplication and praise. He was requested to constantly keep in view the happiness of the people and never suffer himself to be negligent in the achievement of that object.¹

18. The Instrument of instructions continued :
“Considering his office to be that of a guardian of his people, let him act with the utmost caution . Let him keep under the command of reason, both his favour and displeasure.

“The disobedient he shall strive to reclaim by good advice. If that fails, let him punish . but he shall not take away life till after the most mature deliberation.

“He must not stain his tongue with abuse.

“Those who apply for justice, let them not be afflicted with delay and expectation.

“Let him appoint to offices men of worth, foresight and integrity . Let him object to no one on account of his religion or sect.

¹ Every Viceroy had under him the following principal officers namely :

- (i) a Commander in-Chief.
- (ii) a Chief Justice.
- (iii) a Civil Governor.
- (iv) Collectors of the Imperial Revenues.
- (v) Director of Land Records.
- (vi) The Government Treasurer.

“Let the roads be made safe (for traffic) by stationing proper guards for the protection of the travellers.

“Let him receive constant (confidential) information regarding all kinds of activities.

“Let him always be attentive to the discipline of the troops, and see that their arms are kept in good order.

“Let him strive to increase cultivation and population. Let him consider it his duty to befriend the industrious husbandmen.

“Let him be careful to appoint impartial collectors of the revenues, and be always watchful over their conduct”.

19. The digging of reservoirs, wells and water-courses, the planting of gardens, the erection of *sarais* and other pious and useful foundations and institutions, the repairs of those that had fallen into decay, were all enjoined to his care.

A RARE GENIUS.

20. It is manifest from the facts cited above that Rai Singhi had attained almost the highest rank and status at the Court normally available at the time for the Indian Princes, excluding the members of the Imperial Family. Men with such gifts are rare—

very rare, indeed. They prove their mettle and rise to their best and highest in moments of emergency and crisis. Whether as a brave warrior or as a statesman of the first calibre, Rai Singhji has left indelible mark on the pages of history.

CHAPTER XI.

INFLUENCE AND HIGH POSITION AT AKBAR'S COURT.

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED MANSABDARS.

'The Imperial Gazetteer of India' (published under the authority of the Government of India), Volume VIII, page 205, bears testimony to the exalted position of Rai Singhji at the Imperial Court in the following words: "Rai Singh succeeded his father in 1571 and ruled for forty years; he was the first Raja of Bikaner, was *one of Akbar's most distinguished generals*, serving in the country round Attock, in Gujarat, the Deccan, Sind and other parts, and was rewarded with a grant of 52 districts, including Hansi and Hissar. He had a place on the list of Mansabdars, *higher than any other Hindu except the Chief of Amber (Jaipur).*"

2. Comparisons are odious, but a relevant explanation in regard to the higher Mansab conferred upon the Rulers of Jaipur appears to be necessary. The State of Jaipur did not exist in the reign of Akbar as an independent kingdom, in the same sense as the States of Bikaner, Udaipur and Jodhpur. The Rulers of Amber were at the time tributaries to, and vassals of, the Ranas of Mewar.

The Ranas had rendered themselves obnoxious to the Islamite by their resolute hostility to the Moslem Throne. It was primarily out of spite and pique, and with the object of depriving the Rana of Mewar of military assistance, that the Rajput Princes of Amber and Bundi were wooed by Akbar by the grant of high Mansabs and other distinctions.

3. Another reason why the Ruler of Amber was accorded special distinction at the Moghul Court is revealed by a study of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, wherein it is stated that Raja Bihari Mal of Amber was honoured by the Emperor as he "was the first Rajput that joined Akbar's Court". Emperor Jahangir, in his Memoirs, has also stressed the fact that the chief reason for the exaltation of Raja Bihari Mal of Jaipur was that he was the first of the Rajputs "to have the honour of entering Akbar's service".

4. The Ruler of Amber was, perhaps, quite justified in responding to the advances, or even taking the initiative himself in seeking admission to the Court, of Akbar, in view of his awkward position *cis-a-vis* the Mewar Darbar. The Rana of Udaipur claimed suzerainty over Amber and

¹ Cf. "History of Rajputana" by Mahamahopadhyaya Puri Babadur Pandit Gani Shanker Gita; "Life of Akbar" by ... of Jodhpur; and "Vir Virat" by ...

while he took good care to keep his vassal in leading strings, the Rana was unable to afford Amber protection against external aggression. The vassal naturally chafed under the irksome bonds of thralldom and came to the conclusion that he could not break away from them except by forming a political alliance with the Great Moghul, which he did, and soon after utilised the new accession of power for wreaking a terrible vengeance on his erstwhile liege-lord.

BIKANER MANSAB HIGHER THAN JAIPUR.

5. The prominence of the Amber Rulers at the Moghul Court vanished as soon as the special circumstances described above lost their significance. In the reigns of Jahangir and other Moghul Emperors, the Rulers of Bikaner had already occupied the place of pre-eminence that was their due by virtue of their superior merits. This is manifest from the fact that Raja Sur Singhji, son of Raja Rai Singhji, enjoyed a Mansab of 8,300 (*viz.*, 5,000 Personal and 3,300 Horse) in the reign of Emperor Jahangir.

6. The *gaddi* of Amber (Jaipur) was occupied by three Rajas during the period when Sur Singhji reigned in Bikaner (from 1614 to 1631 A.D.), namely, Bhau Singhji, Maha Singhji and Jai

Singhji I. Raja Bhau Singhji (1615 A.D.) held a Mansab of 5,000 Personal and 3,000 Horse: total 8,000. Maha Singhji, who reigned from 1615 to 1621 A.D., held a Mansab of 4,000 Personal and 3,000 Horse: total 7,000. The highest Mansab held by Raja Jai Singh I was 4,000 Personal and 4,000 Horse: total 8,000. It is thus clear that every one of these Rulers of Amber was junior in status to Raja Sur Singhji, who excelled them all. The seniority of the Bikaner Rulers was still more marked in some subsequent reigns.

7. For instance, Maharajah Gaj Singhji, another Ruler of Bikaner, held a Mansab of 12,000 (7,000 Personal and 5,000 Horse), which was higher than that of *any other Rajput Prince at the time, including Jaipur*. His son, Maharajkumar Raj Singhji, enjoyed a Mansab of 6,000 (namely, 4,000 Personal and 2,000 Horse), during his father's life-time.

A JODHPUR EPISODE.

8. In spite of the comparative discrepancy in the Mansabs of Raja Rai Singhji and the contemporaneous Rulers of Amber, a characteristic index of the great influence wielded by him at the Imperial Court is furnished by the incidents described in Chap. V. Notwithstanding the fact that Rao

Maldeoji and Rao Udai Singhji of Jodhpur had greatly offended the Emperor by their wars and hostile activities, Rai Singhji was able to persuade the Emperor to ratify the restoration, by him, of the territories of Jodhpur to Udai Singhji and, also to confer on Udai Singhji the title of 'Raja'.

HIGH AND DIGNIFIED PHRASEOLOGY.

9. An insight into the cordial relations that subsisted between Akbar and Rai Singhji is revealed by the honourable and dignified phraseology used by the Emperor in the *Farman*s and other private letters sent by him to the Raja. The following few extracts are cited in support of this fact:

- (i) *Farman*, dated February 1595 A.D., refers to Rai Singhji as "the Pillar of the Realm, the Prop of the Exalted State, Worthy of Favours and Obligations," whose "services of friendship" are highly valued by the Emperor.
- (ii) In another Imperial *Farman*, dated the 14th April 1596, the Emperor, in granting the *pargana* of Nadiad (Guzerat) to Rai Singhji, refers to him as 'The Pillar of the Empire, Perfect in Sincerity and Faith'.

- (iii) By the Imperial *Farman*, dated February 1597, Rai Singhji, "Worthy of Favours . Chosen for various Royal Kindnesses", is granted the Province of Kathiawar (then known as Sorath and Junagadh).
- (iv) "Perfect in Sincerity, True in Faithfulness, being honoured by and proud of the abundance of the Royal Attentions" prefaces another Imperial *Farman* to Rai Singhji, dated August 1597 A.D.
- (v) The Letters Patent, dated the 15th October 1600 A.D., re-granting the *Sarkar* of Nagore to "Rai Singhji refer to him as "the Trusted of the Empire, Pillar of the Exalted Realm, and Worthy of Favours, Kindnesses and Considerations".
- (vi) On appointing him as the Viceroy of Khandesh, in the Deccan, the Emperor referred to Rai Singhji as "Trusted in Sincerity, Constant and Firm in Fidelity, the Chosen of the Nobles and the Cream of the Grandees".

(vii) The Imperial *Farman*, dated the 27th March 1882, is addressed to Rai Singhji, as "the Pillar of the Exalted Empire and the Prop of the vast Imperial Dominions, Worthy of Favours and Obligations."

A GREAT WAR-LORD.

10. Rai Singhji's hereditary martial traditions and strenuous military training, his lion-hearted courage and dauntless bravery on the field of battle, his thorough study of the art of war, his fertile mind that was always optimistically resourceful in the face of danger and heavy odds, his indefatigable industry and tireless energy made him a valuable and important member of Akbar's War Cabinet and a great War-Lord. To these rare gifts, Rai Singhji also added the genius of a competent and capable practical administrator.

11. Akbar soon perceived the unique faculties and rare gifts of Rai Singhji and utilised his talent to the full in the expansion, development and consolidation—and in the administration—of his vast Empire. A man of dazzling talents, possessing a forceful and fascinating personality, Rai Singhji soon acquired a coveted niche in the heart of the Emperor and a domineering position as his coun-

cillor. This, however, brought him into conflict with some of the ministers and other councillors of the Court. There was nothing strange in this. Mediocrity always views genius with distrust and trepidation. Genius, too, not unoften provides its critics with material for backbite and slander.

12. No wonder, therefore, that jealousy and hostility against him grew-up and gathered strength. The slanderers sometimes succeeded in creating misunderstandings between the Emperor and the great Rathore War-Lord. But such clouds were generally of short duration and when the atmosphere cleared up, the sunshine of mutual appreciation and friendliness shone with all the greater splendour and brilliance.

INFLUENCE USED FOR THE WEAL OF OTHERS.

13. The History of the Palanpur State, written by His Highness the Nawab of Palanpur, when he was Heir-Apparent, mentions another instance which throws a side-light on the high position of Rai Singhji at the Court and the beneficial objects for which it was utilised. The history recites that, through the influence and personal intercession of Raja Rai Singhji of Bikaner, the founder of Palanpur State, and the 13th Ruler of Jalo Ghazni Khan Sahib

tion, five years after his arrest and imprisonment by Khan-i-Khanan under the orders of Akbar. Rai Singhji not only succeeded in securing the release of the Diwan, but also persuaded the Emperor to let Ghazni Khanji accompany Rai Singhji in the then forthcoming expedition to Attock.

14. It was in recognition of the good services rendered by the Diwan in this expedition, under the command of Rai Singhji, that secured to him the grant of Palanpur, Deesa and other *parganas* in dowry when the Emperor gave his foster-sister, Bano Begum, in marriage to Ghazni Khan Sahib, and conferred on him a Mansab of 400.¹

A FRIENDLY VISIT.

15. In 1593 A.D., the Emperor conferred another mark of signal distinction on Rai Singhji, when he came out to pay the Raja a personal visit of condolence on the death of Raja Vir Bhadra, son-in-law of Rai Singhji. Akbar, who was visibly affected by the loss of a dear and brilliant friend, personally interceded on behalf of the young

¹ Palanpur State appears to be the oldest Moslem State in India, having been founded in 1394 A.D. The Dynasty first reigned in Jalore for about 200 years. Nawab Ghazni Khan was granted Palanpur in 1586 A.D. He and his descendants exercised common sway over Jalore and Palanpur till about 1695 A.D., when Jalore was wrested by Jodhpur.

children of the deceased and insisted on Rai Singhji to persuade his daughter to abandon her intention of becoming a *sati*.

16. Vir Bhadra had succeeded to the *gaddi* of Rewa, in 1592 A.D., on the death of his father, Raja Ram Chandra, and was a popular figure at the Court. In 1583, when Akbar took umbrage at the continued absence of Ram Chandrajī from the Court and ordered an Imperial Contingent to march on, and occupy, Rewa, Vir Bhadra, then yet in his teens, so tactfully handled the situation as to prevail upon the Emperor to abandon the idea of sending a military expedition and, in its stead, to depute a grandee to visit the Raja and invite him to the Court. The famous Raja Birbal was selected as envoy for this business and so ably did he carry out his mission that Raja Ram Chandra cheerfully consented to accompany him to the Court. Again, it was primarily due to the influence and popularity of the son that the father was received by the Emperor with kindness and courtesy.¹

CREATED "RAJA".

17. As has already been stated elsewhere, the hereditary title of 'Raja' was conferred by Akbar

¹ Raja Ram Chandra was a patron of music. The renowned musician Tan Sen was at first employed as a singer in his Court. When the musician's fame reached Agra, Akbar persuaded the Raja to send Tan Sen to his Court.

on Rai Singhji, in 1573 A.D., in appreciation of the brave and heroic services rendered by him in the Guzerat Wars.

LEOPARD-HUNTING.

18. Not only were Raja Rai Singhji and the Emperor comrades-in-arms in many a field of battle, but they also had common tastes in the world of sport, both of them being exceedingly fond of leopard-hunting. *Ain-i-Akbari* teems with instances of Akbar's love and passion for hunting leopards and other wild beasts.

19. The forests of Bhatner and Nagore (both of which territories were then in the possession of Rai Singhji) abounded in leopards and were thus an object of constant attraction to, and visits from, the Emperor. In all such visits, Akbar was the guest of Rai Singhji and both of them not only enjoyed sport in each other's company, but also developed a strong spirit of *camaraderie*, which was mutually useful in other spheres of life.

CHAPTER XII.

CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH JAHANGIR.

Whereas good friendship subsisted between Rai Singhji and Akbar, his relations with the Emperor Jahangir were still more cordial. On the first anniversary of his accession, the Emperor promoted Rai Singhji to the rank of a Mansabdar of Five Thousand and thus placed him on an equality with some of the Princes of the Royal blood.

UNSOLICITED ASSISTANCE.

2. Indeed, so great was the Emperor's concern for Rai Singhji that, when, on one occasion, Rajkumar Dalpat Singh rebelled against his father, Rai Singhji, Jahangir, of his own accord and without any request for help on the part of Rai Singhji, deputed two senior Mansabdars (*viz.*, Raja Jagan Nath of Jaipur, a commander of Five Thousand, and Mir Mu'izzu-l-Mulk, a commander of Three Thousand) to bring about an amicable settlement between the father and son, and on put a stop to a disturbance, and on anxiety to the Emperor.

A MARK OF SPECIAL CONFIDENCE.

3. Soon after Jahangir's accession to the throne, Prince Khusrau rebelled against his father and suddenly left Agra for Lahore on an errand of plunder and rapine. When the Emperor went in pursuit of his son, so great was his trust in Rai Singhji that 'in full confidence he left him (i.e. Rai Singhji) in charge of Agra, the capital, a position that is ordinarily vested in the Prime Minister.

4. Later, when Jahangir desired to call the Empresses, and other ladies of the *harem*, to his camp at Lahore, Rai Singhji was placed in the important and responsible charge of the travelling *harem*. He accompanied the party for some distance, when on account of disturbances in Bikaner at the time, he was obliged to proceed home.

5. This absence was utilised by some of his ministers and courtiers as an opportunity for poisoning the ears of the Emperor against Rai Singhji. But Jahangir, who, in his autobiographical *Memoirs*, describes the Raja as "one of the most considerable of the Rajput Amirs", well knew the necessity and importance of keeping on good terms with such an outstanding personality as that of Rai Singhji. Therefore, on return from the expedition against Khusrau, he went out of his way to confirm all the territorial grants that had been made by

Akbar to Rai Singhji, thereby indicating that the tell-tale complaints had no effect on him.

6. The Imperial *Farman*s in the archives of the State, and other contemporaneous historical records, contain several evidences of the high appreciation expressed by the Emperor for the services rendered by Rai Singhji, and of the presents made by Jahangir to him, from time to time, of valuable elephants, horses, jewellery and Robes of Honour.

PREPONDERATING INFLUENCE IN COURT CIRCLES.

7. A correct index of Rai Singhji's preponderating influence at the Imperial Court is furnished by an incident that occurred on the death of Akbar. When Akbar was lying on his death-bed, Raja Man Singhji of Jaipur worked-up an intrigue to secure the succession in favour of Prince Khusrau. Khan-i-Azam, Mirza Aziz Kokah, a commander of Five Thousand and, for some time, Prime Minister and Generalissimo of the Moghul army, and several other Nobles, joined the conspiracy. Raja Man Singh¹ went so far as to leave Agra with Khusrau,

¹ Raja Man Singh, after the accession of Jahangir, escaped punishment by paying, according to Col. Tod, the incredible sum of ten crores of rupees (or £10-millions) by way of amercement.

Jahangir deprived Khan-i-Azam of all his honours, ranks and possessions and imprisoned him. The Khan

while Akbar was passing through the agony and pangs of death, in order to proceed to Bengal, where he had been Viceroy for some time, and to proclaim Khusrau, as Emperor of India, from there.

8. It was at this juncture that Jahangir, who, as has already been stated, had full confidence in the friendship and integrity of Raja Rai Singhji, sent to him post-haste the following personal letter: "To the Pillar of the State, the Prop of the Empire, Worthy of Exalted Favours, Distinguished by Dignified Sympathies, meriting a Variety of Considerations, the Object of Unlimited kindness and Boundless regards, Chosen for the most Benign Munificence, Rao Rai Singh,¹ being Proud of, and Dignified by, the unending Imperial Attentions".

9. The letter proceeded: "The enemies of "His Majesty² have grown very weak during the "past few days, and the weakness still continues."

ment through the intercession of some princesses of the Imperial harem. He was afterwards pardoned.

¹ It has already been mentioned that both Raja Rai Singhji and his father Kalyan Singhji enjoyed the title of 'Raja' from the Emperor. In some of the correspondence, however, the expressions "Rao" and 'Rai' have been used, probably as a mark of intimacy that subsisted between him and the Emperor. Rai Singhji is designated as 'Raja' in the list of Mansabdars given in the *Tabakat-i-Akbari* and other histories.

² An euphemistic way of alluding to the illness of exalted persons and of those that are dear and near.

"It is necessary that the Pillar of the State should instantly proceed to the Imperial Court without any delay and with the utmost expedition. He should reach (the Imperial Capital of Agra) with the utmost speed, travelling over as great a distance as possible during the day time as well as by night. He should not permit himself to be detained by anything . and, taking the utmost care and diligence, he should not admit of any delay (in starting from Bikaner and reaching Agra)".

10. Rai Singhji repaired to Agra with the utmost expedition and arranged the affairs connected with the succession to the Throne so skilfully that, when Akbar died on the 13th October 1605, Jahangir was installed as the Emperor of India without hitch.¹ The frustration of a plot engineered, and persisted in, by such important grandees of the Court as Raja Man Singhji and Khan-i-Azam is a feat of which Rai Singhji and his descendants might well feel proud.

11. In another letter, Jahangir complains to,

¹ Rai Singhji reached Agra when Akbar was on the point of death. It took the Raja nearly a week's time to overcome the formidable obstacles that had been raised in the way of succession and to smash the deep-laid conspiracy. Akbar died on 2nd *Aban*, A.H. 1013. Jahangir was proclaimed Emperor on 10th *Aban*. The success of Jahangir's accession was largely due to Rai Singhji's *savoir faire* and his dexterous handling of a delicate situation.

and reproaches, Rai Singhji for not writing regularly to the Emperor. The letter runs: "The Trusted of the Empire, Worthy of Royal kindness and attentions, the Cream of his Peers and Equals, being distinguished and honoured by Imperial regards and blessings, should know whether it is the meet result of all the excellent services he rendered in the past that, associating himself with oblivion, he has now altogether forgotten us and does never recall his memory to our most noble and sacred heart. In spite of his indifference, we think of him,—that best of all the well-wishers of the Empire (*i.e.*, Rai Singh)—in many an auspicious moment. He should, henceforth, unlike the past, always send his letters and (he may rest assured that) in response thereto, he will be honoured with the gracious replies (from us)."

12. With this letter, the Emperor forwarded a valuable Royal silk Robe as a present to the Raja.

JAHANGIR'S DEEP CONCERN FOR RAI SINGH.

13. Rai Singhji was, on one occasion, invited to Lahore to meet the Emperor. The Imperial *Farman* (dated the 8th April 1607 A.D.), conveying the invitation, states that, as soon as the Raja reaches Lahore, "we shall surround him with (our

special favours) . For the time being, as a token of our regards, we are sending a valuable private shawl, often used by us, for his elevation and honour.”

14. For a long time, Rai Singhji was troubled by, and engaged in suppressing, the rebellions of Rajkumar Dalpat Singh. It appears that, during this period, he was not in correspondence with the Emperor, with the result that, in November 1607, a personal letter was received from Jahangir, which reads : “The Cream of his Peers and Contemporaries, Worthy of Favours and Obligations, being Distinguished and Dignified by the Imperial kindnesses , should know that it has reached our ears that his imprudent son Dalpat, through undutifulness and misfortune, is rough and excessive in his dealings with him (*i.e.*, Rai Singh) and that, consequently, he (*i.e.*, Rai Singh) has been obliged to lead an army against, and besiege, the rebellious son.”

15. The letter proceeds to say that the Emperor could not tolerate such a position and had ordered a detachment of the Imperial army to proceed in aid of Rai Singhji. But, as no communication had been received from him, the Emperor reconsidered the matter . . . the news might possibly

deferred the despatch of the army. If, however, the news was correct, Rai Singh should at once inform the Emperor of the full facts so that the Imperial army may be despatched in order to frustrate Dalpat Singh's designs and inflict a crushing defeat on him. This communication was personally brought by the son of a distinguished Noble of the Court, Baha-ud-Daula, and was accompanied by the assurance: "It is necessary that he (i.e., Rai Singh) should always be confident of the fact that the Imperial favours are ever inclined and attentive to his affairs."

OCCASIONAL RIFTS IN THE LUTE.

16. Jahangir, on account of his inordinate fondness for drink and women, was not so hardy and industrious as Akbar. The direction of the affairs of the Empire was largely left to his Ministers, some of whom found their labours and personalities eclipsed by the towering figure of Rai Singhji, whose exceptional talent, wide and varied experience and brilliant intelligence spelled ruination and defeat to many of their manoeuvres and plots. Their efforts to create a schism between him and Jahangir can thus be easily accounted for.

17. But the result of such endeavours, whenever they succeeded, was but transitory. Rai

Singhji's foresight, imagination, sound judgment and courage invariably triumphed and the bridge that was then^o constructed over the erst-while chasm proved a broad high-way on which the Emperor and his princely-ally drove a coach-and-four of re-welded friendship and *camaraderie*.

CHAPTER XIII.

HIS CHARACTER AND DEATH.

HIS MARVELLOUS THRONE.

Of Raja Rai Singhji, it may truly be said, that *his saddle was his Throne*. He can be visualised for the greater part of the year, from day to day, on the back of his horse, at the head of his gallant Rathores, arranging the disposition of his troops, charging the enemy forces, blowing-up their ramparts, scaling forts and, in other ways, engaged in active warfare.

A SPLENDID START.

2. He was brought-up in an environment of martial traditions, which, with the blue blood of the brave and intrepid Rathore warriors coursing through his veins, developed into a massive personality, pulsating in every fibre with an unsatiable passion for adventure and military exploit. While yet barely out of his teens, destiny presented him an opportunity of measuring swords, and testing mettle, with a formidable Pathan Chief, whose superior war strategy and military skill had not only succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat on

the huge army of the Rana of Udaipur, but who had also kept at bay, and foiled for a time, the armies of Akbar. The signal success achieved by Rai Singhji in what at first sight appeared to be an unequal struggle, imparted to him a sense of self-confidence that proved of considerable value, and was a great asset, in his subsequent warfares.

A MOSAIC OF HUMAN VALUES.

3. Rai Singh's campaigns in Afghanistan and Baluchistan brought him into close and intimate touch with a culture which, and a class of people who, knew of no distinction, traditional or natural, except the power to wrest authority by virtue of superior personal accomplishment. In those lands of unhewn civilisation and rugged living, during the mediaeval period, no man, howsoever high in lineage, could aspire to leadership, or actually grow into a leader, except when he ate the food of the common soldier at the same table with him, wore the rank's clothes, lived square with them and yet appeared better and higher—bigger in parts, richer in knowledge, greater in power, taller in stature and possessed the capacity to command and compel obedience.

4. This contact trained Rai Singhji's keen perception into a new standard of human values where the worth of an individual is assessed, from

day to day, on the result of his incessant struggle for supremacy and survival, as detached from the appraisement of position based on considerations of antiquity, lineage and other cognate circumstances. It was this intimate knowledge of dignity and intrinsic merit from a new angle of vision, mingled with the hoary traditions of dynastic rulership—the exceptional talent for blending the aristocratic with the democratic—that made him an invaluable war-colleague of the Emperors Akbar and Jahangir.

NAPOLEONIC LOVE FOR WAR.

5. Warfare in general, and personal adventure in particular, seem to have possessed an irresistible charm and attraction for Rai Singhji throughout his life. Although he was engaged in, and fought, numerous battles, neither the local chronicles of Bikaner, nor the accounts of contemporaneous Moslem historians, disclose the traces of any military order of outstanding merit in the armies of the State, at that time, who could have rendered him material assistance in his far-flung campaigns, in which not only high military skill and strategy, but also a thorough mastery over the diverse techniques of war, were essential.

6. A modern historian is, therefore, on tolerably safe ground in assuming that it was

Rai Singhji's own versatile genius that planned these daring enterprises and it was his own radiating personality that threw out the rays of vitality which kept his desert fleet of privateers—war-ridden and war-sick as they must many a time have felt in the course of their perennial excursions—in a state of constant fitness for war-service and unwavering enthusiasm for exploit and adventure.

7. In the epoch in which Rai Singhji lived communications were necessarily imperfect. There were few roads. The rivers were generally unbridged. The means of locomotion were slow. Campaigns generally dragged on, and necessitated continuous absence from home, from, say, October of one year till April of the succeeding year. It was only during the monsoons and the season of extreme heat that war activities were relaxed or suspended. It must have required a napoleonic love and passion for war to sustain through such a long drawn-out military life when, year in and year out, the grim spectres of aggressive and offensive hostilities stalked every moment of his life.

PATRIARCH OF REFORM.

8. Rai Singhji possessed a composite, comprehensive and varied personality. While constantly engaged in the arts of war, he did not

A GLIMPSE OF COURT LIFE.

15. A cultured scholar of no mean order, Rai Singhji was a boon companion and charming friend amidst the galaxy of intellectual giants and famous scholars that constituted a marked characteristic of Akbar's Court.

16. Some notion of the atmosphere and ideals that prevailed at the Court, and which probably constituted the predominating factors in directing the affairs of the Government, may be deduced from the following prayer which was recited by Akbar on the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, in the 25th year of his reign, in the *Jama Masjid* of Fatehpur Sikri. According to Faizee, this was a favourite prayer at the Court:

The Lord who gave me Empire,
Gave me a wise heart and a strong arm,
Guided me in the way of Justice and Equity
And drove all but Justice from my thoughts.
His praise surpasses understanding !
Great is His Power !
God is great.

A STURDY WARRIOR.

17. The long list of Wars and Campaigns in which Rai Singhji took part (*vide* Appendix 'A'), and his distinguished military exploits, are in themselves sufficient to indicate that he led

an arduous and strenuous life. An idea of his hardy habits may be gathered from the itinerary of the expedition undertaken by him on the outbreak of the Second Guzerat War, when he accompanied Akbar, and wherein, according to the testimony of more than one independent historian, he was "in high command of the Army". A description of this journey is given in the *Tabakat-i-Akbari*.

18. Akbar, with his companions and attendants, left Agra on a she-camel (*sandni*) on Sunday morning (23rd August 1573 A.D.). He rode the same day to Toda, a distance of about seventy miles, without drawing rein. There he ate what he could get, and continued his journey taking a short rest at some halting place in the night. On the morning of Monday, he quickly resumed his journey covering altogether 200 miles in two days. At the village of Mu'izabad, he halted mainly because several of his attendants had dropped behind.

19. On the third morning, he reached Ajmer,¹ where he went through the usual observance of paying his respects to the *dargah* of Khwaja Mu'in-ud-din Chishti. In the afternoon

¹ A distance of 228 miles, *vide* the historian Thornton; or, 280 miles, according to Maulana Faizi.

CHAPTER XIV. °

SOME FAMOUS CADETS.

RAJKUMAR PRITHVI RAJ.

Rajkumar Prithvi Rajji was born in 1549 A.D. In the eloquent language of Col. Tod, "Prithvi Raj was one of the most gallant chieftains of the age, and like Troubadour princes of the West, could grace a cause with the soul-inspiring effusions of the muse, as well as aid it with his sword: nay, in an assembly of the bards of Rajasthan, the palm of merit was unanimously awarded to the Rathore cavalier."

2. According to the investigations of Dr. L. P. Tessitori, when, in 1873 A.D., Raja Rai Singhji was given an important command in the second Guzerat War, Prithvi Rajji was incorporated in the Bikaner contingent; and was, thereafter, in active service, off and on, for several years.

3. In 1582 A.D., Mirza Mohammad Hakim, King of Kabul, invaded India and Akbar led a retaliatory expedition to Afghanistan. In this expedition, Prithvi Raj was given command of a field unit and performed valiant service. His

gallantry on the field won for him the fief of Gagron.¹

4. The *Sarkar* of Gagron, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, consisted of 12 Mahals and was situated in the *suba* of Malwa. It had an annual revenue of 45,35,749 *dams* or Rs. 1,13,395.²

5. Apart from being a renowned soldier, Prithvi Rajji was a great poet and his immortal poem, known as "*Veli Krishna Rukamani ri*", is described by Dr. Tessitori as "one of the most fulgent gems in the rich mine of the Rajasthani literature". It is, indeed, a lasting monument of poetical ingenuity, in which elaborateness of detail is blended with simplicity of conception, and a tender exquisiteness of feeling is expressed in immaculate form. The poem deals with the romantic story of the *gandharva vivah* (marriage) of Lord Krishna with the charming and lovely maiden-princess, Rukmani, and describes, in a most picturesque language and with graphic vivacity—albeit with the devotion of a *bhakta*—their amours.

¹ This place was in ancient times the Kichhi Rajputs and is now situated in the "

² No stipulations as regards the supply of assignment for charitable purpose, appear to this fief.

wedded bliss and the natural fruit of wed-lock, namely, the birth of a son, Pradyumna.

6. Besides this *magnum opus*, Prithvi Raj composed a number of small poems, mostly *Sakha ra git*, that is, commemorative songs. Of the many collections of miscellaneous poetical songs found now-a-days in the hands of the bards of Rajputana, there would be few, indeed, which do not contain at least one or two songs by Prithvi Rajji.

7. The incident which has made the name of Prithvi Rajji famous throughout the length and breadth of India relates to the heroic inspiration, dare-devil courage and martial stimulus with which he heartened and comforted Rana Pratap in a moment of that great hero's deep mental depression. The armies of Akbar, and the resources of the Moghul Empire, were engaged in waging a ruthless war against Rana Pratap. Years rolled by in this unequal struggle, each ending with a diminution of Pratap's means and an increase to his misfortunes.

8. The brave Rana saw, day after day, his kindered fall around him on the battle field. There were moments when even the wife of his bosom was insecure.¹ His children were not only deprived

¹ On one occasion Rana Pratap's wife and children were saved by friendly Bhils, who carried them in wicker-baskets and concealed

of every luxury, but they had also to go even without food for days at a time.¹ The wants of those that were dearer to him than his own life, the weeping and the piercing shrieks of his starving children, drove Pratap to frenzy. The loss of wealth and land left his fortitude unsubdued. But the lamentations of his children unmanned him.

9. A cleverly worded report was received by Akbar from the Commander of the Moghul Force in Udaipur. The Court circles interpreted this communication as an indication of submission on the part of Rana Pratap. The news was naturally a source of great exultation to Akbar, who commanded public rejoicings. The despatch was also shown to

them in a disused tin mine, where they had to pass several days in starvation and constant dread of capture and abduction.—Cf. Col. Tod's *Rajasthan*.

¹ "With such pertinacity did the Mogul myrmidons pursue them (i.e., Rana Pratap and his family), that '5 meals had been prepared and abandoned for want of opportunity to eat them'. On one occasion, Pratap's queen and his son's wife were preparing a few cakes from the flour of the meadow grass (called *mol*), of which one (cake) was given to each; half for the present, the rest for a future meal. Pratap was stretched beside them pondering on his misfortunes, when a piercing cry from his daughter roused him from reflection: a wild cat had darted on the reserved portion of food, and the agony of hunger made her shrieks insupportable."—Cf. 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' by Col. James Tod, Volume I, page 342, 1829 edition.

Prithvi Raj, whom the intelligence filled with intense grief.

10. To continue the story in the inimitable style of Col. Tod, "With all the warmth and frankness of his nature, he (*i.e.*, Prithvi Rajji) told the king it was a forgery of some foe to the fame of the Rajpoot Prince. 'I know him well', said he; 'for your crown he would not submit to your terms.' He requested and obtained permission from the king to transmit by his courtier a letter to Pratap, ostensibly to ascertain the fact of his submission, but really with the view to prevent it."

11. The famous letter declared that the hopes of Hindu India were fastened on Pratap and, but for him, who had not so far bowed to the Moghul, all would be placed on the same level by Akbar. Though Pratap had temporarily lost his wealth and kingdom, yet he had preserved the priceless treasure of Rajput independence. Despair and helplessness had driven many to the feet of the proud Emperor. Pratap alone had preserved the fair name of the Kshatriyas from infamy. His manliness and his sword had maintained the pride and honour of Rajasthan. Akbar was bound to be over-reached one day: he could not live for ever. Then would the races of India come to Pratap, for the seed of the Rajput to sow in our desolate lands. To him, India

looked for her preservation, so that its purity could again become resplendent.¹

12. The letter of Prithvi Raj was accompanied by a small poem, consisting of two couplets, which are still famous in India and read as follows :

पातल जी पतशाह, बोले सुख हंतां वयगा ।

सिहर पक्षम दिसु मांह, जगे कासप राव उत ॥ १ ॥

पटकू मूछां पाण, के पटकू निज तन करद ।

दोजे लिख दोवाण, इण दो सहली वात इक ॥ २ ॥

If Patal² himself happens to call (Akbar) Badshah, the Sun would rise in the West.³

Shall I twirl my moustaches (in pride), or should I kill myself with my own sword (in shame)?

Write, O Diwan !⁴ one of the two alternatives.⁵

¹ A full translation of the letter, of which the above extract is a summary, is given in Col. Tod's "Annals of Mewar".

² 'Patal' is a colloquial and poetical synonym of Pratap.

³ The use of this metaphor suggests that it is as impossible for Rana Pratap to hail Akbar as Emperor as it would be for the Sun to rise in the West.

⁴ The presiding Deity of the Udaipur House is *Shiva*, known in the local parlance as "*Eklinga*", to whom the Throne and the State of Udaipur are supposed to be dedicated. The Maharana, as a devotee of *Eklinga*, rules the State in the name of God *Eklinga* and in the capacity of His Diwan.

⁵ In presenting the English translation of Prithvi Rajji's famous poetical compositions, I echo and endorse the following expression of opinion by Col. Tod: "It is no affectation to say that the spirit evaporates in the lameness of the translation. The author could feel the force, though he failed to imitate the strength, of the original".

13. "This effusion of the Rathore", continues Col. Tod, "was equal to ten thousand men; it nerved the drooping mind of Pratap, and roused him into action." The exhortation steeled Rana Pratap in his determination to hold-out against Akbar, and, with the hot blue-blood of Rajput royalty raising in his heart, he indited the following marvellous three couplets to Prithvi Rajji:

तुरक कहासौ मुख पतौ, इण तन सूं इकलिंग ।

जगै जांहौ जगसो, प्राची बीच पतंग ॥ १ ॥

खुसी हूंत पीथल कमध, पटको मूंछां पाण ।

पळटण हें जेतै पतौ, कलमां सिर केवाण ॥ २ ॥

सांग मूंड सहसी सको, समजस जहर सवाद ।

भड पीथल जोतो भलां, बैण तुरक सूं वाद ॥ ३ ॥

As long as this body exists, by the grace of *Eklinga*, Pratap shall call him (the Emperor) by no other name than 'Turk'.¹ The Sun shall rise in the East where it always rises.

Gladly, therefore, O Rathore, Peethal!² twirl up your moustaches.

The sword of Pratap shall always strike at the heads of the Moslems, even as he shall bear the thrusts of their spears on his head.

¹ A term of contempt, in the Rajput parlance, for the Moghul Emperor.

² A poetical synonym for Prithvi Rajji.

Because the glory of a foe is as bitter as poison.

Brave Peethal ! hearten up, thou hast triumphed in thy argument with the 'Turk'.

14. In proffering the above advice, Prithvi Rajji gave evidence of an independence of character and fearless disregard of consequences, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel. To openly sympathise with a person who had mortally offended the great and powerful Moghul Despot, and was by all accounts a most formidable rebel—to counsel an open enemy of the Emperor to hold out against him and brave his wrath—was an act of audacious effrontery. To predict the fall of the mighty Satarap, evidently with a view to infuse courage and determination in the drooping heart of the Rana, was a piece of rampant madness.

15. This incidence gives a glimpse of the indomitable will and the proud spirit surging in the heart of Prithvi Rajji, which distinguished him from the other grandees of the Court and enabled him to stand on a high and exalted level, all by himself. Dr. Tessitori judged and appraised his character at its proper value, when he recorded: "He (*i.e.*, Prithvi Raj) was an admirer of courage and unbending dignity, and a sworn enemy of degradation and cringing servility. With the same freeness with which he w

pose a song in praise of an act of gallantry or of determination performed by a friend or by a foe, he would condemn in verses his own brother, the Raja of Bikaner, or even the all-powerful Akbar for any act of weakness or of injustice committed by them."

16. It was, perhaps, this remarkably conspicuous trait of his character, which had secured to him not only "the palm of merit" among the bards of Rajasthan, but also a place of respect and affection in the heart of Akbar. Prithvi Raj is the only Rajput Prince, who has had his memory immortalised by a poetical composition by Akbar himself. When the Emperor, in his old age, was left a lonely man by the demise of his bosom friends and the desertion of other dear companions, he composed the following poem in a moment of abandonment :

पौथल सों मजलिस गई, तानसेन सों राग ।

हंसिवो, रमिवो, बोलिवो, गयो बीरवल साथ ॥

With Peethal has gone the Majlis,¹

With Tan Sen, the Music ;

With the death of Birbal departed laughter, gaiety
and the pleasures of conversations.

RAJKUMAR KISHEN SINGH.

17. Rajkumar Kishen Singhji was the fourth and youngest son of Raja Rai Singhji. He was

¹ 'Majlis' stands for the pleasures of companionship, or attractions of friendly gatherings.

founder of the *Kishansingot* clan and progenitor of the famous *thikanas* of Nima and Sankhu in the Bikaner State. °

18. When Shahjahan quarrelled with his father and, after defeating the Governor of the Province of Bengal near Rajmahal, in a pitched battle, obtained possession of Bengal and also seized Bihar, Kishen Singhji was his right-hand man and the commander of his military forces.

19. In 1609 A.D., Kishen Singhji and Mahabat Khan commanded an expedition against Udaipur in which, to quote Jahangir's own words, "Kishen Singh performed laudable service, and was wounded in the leg by a spear in the fight with Rana's men". In this battle, about twenty Chiefs and Nobles of Bikaner were killed, apart from heavy loss of other rank and file in wounded, killed and captured.¹ In recognition of the eminent services rendered by Kishen Singhji in this war, he was promoted to the rank of a Mansabdar of 3,000 (Personal, 2,000: Horse, 1,000).

20. Kishen Singhji and Mahabat Khan² were also engaged in the pursuit and defeat of Prince

¹ Kishen Singhji, at considerable risk to his life, entered the enemy ranks and, by his dauntless bravery and dexterous swordsmanship, created confusion and terror in their midst. About 3,000 Udaipur soldiers were taken captives in this war.

² Mahabat Khan had served Jahangir personally from child¹.

Khusrau, the eldest son of the Emperor Jahangir, when the son rebelled against his father.

21. In 1615, Jahangir raised the Mansab of Maharaj Kishen Singhji to 4,500. Kishen Singhji, though only a cadet, thus became a senior Mansabdar, taking rank and precedence with the Ruling Princes of some of the senior Indian States.

22. The circumstances of Kishen Singhji's death are described in detail in the Memoirs of Jahangir. It appears that Govind Das, a near relative and Vakil of Raja Sur Singhji, had killed his nephew, a youth of the name of Gopal Das. Kishen Singhji expected that the Raja would meet out suitable punishment to Govind Das for his crime, but it appears that Sur Singhji took no notice of the murder. When Kishen Singhji saw that the Raja had relinquished the idea of punishing Gobind Das, he resolved to take revenge for the death of his kinsman and not to allow his blood to pass away unavenged. One night, he (*i.e.*, Kishen Singhji) assembled some of his relatives, friends and servants, and told them that he would go that night to take the life of Gobind Das, whatever might happen.

When Jahangir ascended the throne, Mahabat Khan was raised to a Mansab of 1,500 and was appointed Comptroller of the Emperor's private establishment and household. Mahabat Khan, later on, rebelled against, and imprisoned, Jahangir.

Sur Singhji had no information of the intentions of Kishen Singhji. They were in Ajmer at the time.

23. After midnight, Kishen Singhji, with Rajkumar Karan Singhji, eldest son and heir of Raja Sur Singhji, and some other companions, arrived at the gate of the Raja's dwelling and sent some experienced men on foot to the house of Govind Das, which was near that of the Raja. Kishen Singh, who was on horseback, stationed himself near the gate with a view to prevent Govind Das from escaping, should he attempt to do so. The men on foot entered the house of Govind Das and engaged the guards in a battle, killing some of them. While this fight was going on, Govind Das was awakened and, in a state of bewilderment, he seized his sword and came out, and joined in the *melee*.

24. When Kishen Singhji's men had killed some of Govind Das's people, they advanced in search of Govind Das; and, meeting him, one of them engaged Govind Das in a duel and killed him.

25. Before the news of the death of Govind Das reached Kishen Singhji, he, unable to bear the suspense, dismounted and came inside the dwelling. His men protested and said that it was not right for the Rajkumar to be on foot, but he would not listen. Meanwhile, the fighting had raised a general uproar all over the Camp. N

and, not knowing the true state of affairs, apprehended a surprise attack by some foe. Seizing their arms, they rushed against the men who were on foot. The number of Kishen Singh's men, which was small and had been further thinned by casualties in fighting, was now reduced to about ten. The soldiers of the camp attacked the invaders and killed most of them including Kishen Singhji, who fought bravely and received several gaping wounds before he fell and was despatched by a spear-thrust. The total number of Kishen Singh's men killed in the affray was 36.

26. When the morning dawned, Surat Singhji saw his brother and some of his other relatives, who were dearer to him than his own life, lying killed in his camp. The whole business was then revealed to him, alas! too late for any remedy.

RAJKUMAR AMAR SINGH.

27. Amar Singhji, another brother of Raja Rai Singhji, is a well-known figure in the history of Bikaner and is famous for his acts of daring and gallantry. In 1597 A.D., he happened to offend the Emperor and left the Court. In the fashion prevalent among the malcontent Rajputs in those days, he became a *barotia* (i.e., a brigand), and collected a band of about 2,000 followers. With this small

army, he raided and plundered the Imperial territories. The Emperor was naturally annoyed and sent a sufficiently large force under a Muslim Commander, named Hamza *alias* Arab Khan, to teach Amar Singh a lesson : and, as far as possible, to catch him alive.

28. Akbar mentioned this fact to Prithvi Rajji, who knowing his brother's martial prowess and nimble-footed agility, predicted that Amar Singh would never be caught alive : and, in all probability, he might be able to kill his pursuers. The Emperor pooh-poohed what he thought the pompous declaration of a swollen-headed Rathore.

29. Prithvi Rajji secretly informed his brother of his conversation with the Emperor. Amar Singhji collected his followers and, informing them of this incident, appealed to them to support him in maintaining his own and his brother's reputation and honour.

30. The Imperial troops, after ransacking the country, succeeded in tracing Amar Singhji in a village and surrounded his camp. He was at the time fast asleep, after a dose of opium. No one dared to awake the brave Rathore, as he had a nasty habit of striking with his sword when so disturbed. Arrows and bullets began to fly in all directions, yet Amar Singh lay undisturbed. When the situa-

tion grew critical, his sweet-heart gently broke his slumber by the melodious strains of a martial song. Seizing his sword, Amar Singh quickly mounted his horse and rallied his men. He gave them opium, and sallied forth charging and cutting through the serried ranks of the Imperial troops. Amar Singh then turned back, dealing death blows and creating havoc, right and left, and made direct for their chief commander, Arab Khan.

31. When his steed confronted the commander's elephant, he caused his horse to spring quickly in the astonishing manner peculiar to the horses of Rajputana.¹ With the two front feet of his horse resting on the tusk of the elephant, Amar Singh made a savage attack on Arab Khan. One of his hands was holding the *howdah* and with the other hand he was on the point of striking a blow at Arab Khan, when a sword-stroke from behind cut Amar Singh's body into two. While the lower half of his body fell off the horse back, the upper half leapt-up and his sword found its way into Arab Khan's heart, before dropping dead in the *howdah*.

32. It is said that the first news of the incident

¹ This feat is "represented in Mewar pictures of the great Rana Pratap and his famous steed *Chatak*".—Vide Col. Powlett's "Gazetteer of Bikaner".

which reached Delhi, reported the death of Amar Singh. The Emperor immediately sent for Prithvi Rajji and, exultingly, said to him: "Prithvi Raj, go and give Amru water."¹ Prithvi Raj, who knew his brother well, would not believe the news and denounced it as false. Soon after, a messenger brought the news of Arab Khan's death and also the significant intelligence that the upper-half of Amar Singh's body lay with the corpse of the Musalman commander in the *howdah*, while the lower half was found on the ground. The Emperor, in the ecstasy of admiration, then exclaimed: "Allah! well done, Amru!² Ah Father! Amru *was* a Hindu, a flying tiger! Bravo! You too, Prithvi Raj, who had such faith in your brother! Your pledge is good indeed!"³

33. Amar Singhji's lady-love composed the following martial song to commemorate the event and preserve the memory of her martyred sire:

आरव सारयो अमरसो, वड हथै वरौयाम ।

हठ कर खेडै हारणी, कमधज आयौ काय ॥ १ ॥

कमर कटे उडकै कमंध, भमर झएलौ भार ।

आरव हन होदैं अमर, समर बजाई सार ॥ २ ॥

¹ This has reference to a funeral rite among the Hindus.

² Diminutive synonym of Amar Singh.

³ Adapted from the story given in Col. Powlett's "Gazetteer of the Bikaner State".

RAJKUMAR SRI RANG.

34. Rajkumar Sri Rangji was a younger brother of Raja Kalyan Singhji and founder of one of the four *sirayats* (that is, one of the seniormost Chief-ships of the Bikaner State) and progenitor of the Thikana of Bhukarka.

35. When Akbar ascended the throne, the territories of Kashmir constituted an independent kingdom and were ruled by Ali Khan *Chak*. On his death, his son Yusuf—after some vicissitudes of fortune in the course of which he was once forced to seek shelter for a while with Akbar—succeeded to the throne. Akbar expected Yusuf to show his gratitude for the Emperor's hospitality by accepting His Majesty's suzerainty. This Yusuf refused to do. By 1885 A.D., it was reported to the Emperor that Yusuf had "firmly and independently established himself".

36. In 1587 A.D.,¹ a military contingent was sent to Kashmir under the command of Mirza Shah Rukh, son-in-law of Emperor Akbar and a Commander of 7,000, followed by reinforcements under Qasim Khan (a commander of 3,000). Rajkumar Sri Rangji, with a band of gallant Rathores, was in the contingent. By the time the army reached the

¹ Till then, "Kashmir was a country which, from its inaccessibility, had never tempted the Kings of Delhi."—*Vide Ain-i-Akbari*.

defiles of the mountains in Kashmir, winter had well set in.

37. The inclemencies of the weather, and the falling of snow, rendered the Moghul operations difficult. The troops were there, but they "could not carry through the business." Qasim Khan proceeded in person to arrest Yaqub Khan. Yaqub escaped from the city by a secret subterranean route and, taking-up his position on a hill, about 6 miles away from Srinagar, engaged the advancing Imperial army in fierce battle. Yaqub had so well fortified and entrenched his position that the object of the Imperialists was, to quote Mr. Beveridge's *Akbar Nama*, "not accomplished." They had to leave the task of subjugating Yaqub unfinished and returned to Srinagar for reinforcements.

38. Meanwhile, Yusuf, too, had his strength increased. Sri Rangji, with the available force, again returned to attack the enemy. There was sanguinary fighting every day for 5 days, without any decisive result. On the 6th day, when snow began to fall heavily, the fighting caused heavy loss to both sides. The experienced Muslim commanders were of opinion that the Imperial army should withdraw for shelter. But a Bika never retraces his steps on a field of battle. The Imperialist ranks were getting thinned rapidly by the

enemy fire and the terrible blasts of icy-cold breeze. Yet, Rajkumar Sri Rangji, with his handful of brave Rathores, stood firm like a rock, and fought fiercely like a tiger, until, one by one, all the Rathores, including their intrepid leader Sri Rangji, after hurling death to the enemy ranks, fell transfixed by the enemy arrows and spears. To quote Abul Fazl, these brave heroes "yielded-up their short lives and reaped eternal renown."

39. The conquest of Kashmir was achieved at the expense, to quote Col. Tod, of prodigal sacrifice of blood shed by the Bikaner heroes in the Imperial service.

RAJKUMAR KESRI DAS.

40. The adventures and military exploits of Rajkumar Ram Singhji, Rajkumar Prithvi Rajji, Rajkumar Amar Singhji, Rajkumar Kishen Singhji and Rajkumar Sri Rangji have already been chronicled. They are a fair type of the narratives, visionary and puerile as they might at first sight appear, of dare-devil courage, indomitable will and passionate eagerness to suffer for a cause that they had made their own, with which the annals of Bikaner abound. But, we will finish this chapter with an anecdote of one more Cadet of Bikaner, namely, Kesri Dasji, nephew of Raja Rai Singhji.

41. Amar Singh^j, as has been described, was killed in a battle with Hamza *alias* Arab Khan. Kesri Das was a believer in the Afghan saying, "tooth for tooth and eye for eye". He nursed a grievance against Hamza and yearned to take revenge for his uncle's murder. One night, when Arab Khan was on a visit to his *jagir* in Bhimbhor, Kesri Das decided to beard the lion in his own den and, with a few companions, he invaded Hamza's residence. Hamza escaped, but several of his men were killed.

43. The news of this assault kindled Akbar's wrath and Khan-i-Khanan, the Prime Minister, under the orders of Akbar, despatched a military contingent to deal-out swift retribution to Kesri Das. In the encounter that soon followed, Kesri Das, after fighting gallantly, paid the price of his love for his uncle, by shedding his own blue blood on the battle-field at Nowshera, N. W. F. P., in or about 1599 A.D.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME ASPECTS OF MORAL AND MATERIAL CONDITION.

A history of the life and exploits of Raja Rāi Singhji would not be complete, without a description of at least some aspects of the moral and material condition of the people of the Bikaner State, so far as that can be ascertained from the contemporaneous historical material still extant, as it stood about 350 years ago. An attempt has been made in this chapter to present some features of the public life, and the official activities, of the day.

2. The State of Bikaner was, even in those ancient days, famous for the splendour of its capital and the prosperity of its subjects.

THE CITY OF BIKANER.

3. A graphic description of the city of Bikaner, as it existed about 400 years ago, is given by the bard Vithuji Suja Nagarajot in his famous poem, *Jetsi ro Chhand*. The city possessed rows of rich bazars crowded with merchants, lords of lacs, with neat balconies and elegant dwelling houses. The life and property of the inhabitants of the city was rendered doubly secure by the

construction of a high' *pucca* city wall, buttressed at suitable distances by unconquerable ramparts and an impassable moat.

4. The town presented a spectacle of peaceful prosperity, where princes, chiefs and people, harassed and persecuted by the Moghul and other Muslim and Hindu potentates, repaired for protection and asylum. It appears that about 10 such chiefs were at that time residing in Bikaner.

5. In the streets of Bikaner, beautiful women, full of grace and modesty, clad in silk and laden with jewelry, strolled unmolested. Fierce-looking warriors, adepts at handling swords, were seen riding on swift horses and camels. Numerous stables of horses, tanks brimming with water, shops dealing in different varieties of gold and silver ware, added to the opulence and grandeur of this desert-capital.

6. India was at that time passing through an age of violent upheaval, when ancient and well-established strongholds crumbled, one after another, to dust under the tread of the Moghul hordes. Bikaner was, by the grace of God, the only city of note, in the length and breadth of Hindustan, that remained unmolested and unconquered, firm like a rock, in the midst of raging tempests.

HOME, SWEET HOME.

7. The mercantile community of Bikaner was, even in those remote times, famous for its enterprise and business capacity. Then, as now, the *sahukars* of Bikaner went abroad, did business and not unoften made money; but, all the time, they languished for a sight of the land of their birth, and, when circumstances permitted, they returned home to roost.

8. The pomp and glamour of the Imperial capital, the sunshine of the Court-favour, was, to most of the Bikaneris, as nothing when weighed against the innocent pleasures of home-life and the exercise of their little influence within their own respective cherished patrimony. The simple fare of the desert, the green pulse and the favourite *rabri*—the prime dish with the Bikaneri—was dearer than the luxurious repasts, and sumptuous dinners, enjoyed abroad.

9. A Bikaner Noble, who was sent to Kabul on service, one day observed a single plant of *phog-bush* growing in the neighbourhood of his residence. The sight of the home shrub so much affected him that he lovingly embraced it and exclaimed in a fit of nostalgia!

तू सँदेसी रुखड़ा, हम परदेसी लोग ।

रुहाने लाया पादशाह, यानि कौन लाया फोग ॥

Plant of my native land, strangers are we,
The Emperor brought me here, but who
 brought you?

BIKANER'S STRATEGIC POSITION.

10. The State of Bikaner enjoyed a strategic position of importance in virtue of its station as a sentinel of the Empire and its situation on the then high-road from central and western India to Sindh, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Persia.

11. The population of Bikaner furnished then, as it does still, some of the best fighting material in India. The Rajput youths of Bikaner not only supplied recruits for the troops of the State, but they were also in large demand for filling-up vacancies in the Imperial armies. The proportion of martial classes to the general population has always been high in Bikaner, and bears a very favourable ratio when compared with other parts of India.

MINTS AND COINS.

12. The right of minting coins is recognised as one of the main emblems of Sovereignty. In the case of Bikaner, this right was recognised even in the reign of Akbar, subject to the provision that the Emperor's name and superscription were embossed on one side of the coin. No stipulation to this effect,

in writing, is traceable, but the inference is drawn from the fact that the old coins minted in Bikaner bear the superscription of the Delhi Emperors on one of the two faces.¹

13. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, mints existed, in the reign of Akbar, at Hissar and Nagore, both of which places, as has been stated elsewhere, were then included in the Bikaner State.²

14. According to the *Ain*, every mint was equipped with arrangements for refining and assaying the metal and for the process of "alony".³ It was staffed with the following officers: (i) a *Darogha*, viz., a person "who must be a man of authority, knowledge and integrity to comprehend the whole and keep every individual to the faithful discharge of his duty", (ii) a *Saraf*, viz., a person

¹ Cf. Despatch dated 23rd January 1847 from Col. Sutherland, A.G.G. in Rajputana, to the Government of India.

² When Nagore and Hissar passed out of the hands of the Rulers Bikaner State, the minting operations were transferred to Bikaner. Silver and Copper coins, minted and issued in the reign of Maharajah Gaj Singhji, are still found in the State Treasury. Coins minted in earlier reigns have, perhaps, disappeared owing to wear and tear, incidental to use, or export.

³ Two parts of cow-dung and one part of salt-petre were used for raising fire to melt the metal ingots, which were put into crucibles. The operation was repeated three or four times, as was found necessary, until the metal was purified. This was known as the process of alony.

"perfectly acquainted with the art of assaying metals and who executed the business of his office with honesty", (iii) an *Amin*, viz., a supervisor "to prevent any one from acting with dishonesty", and, (iv) a *Mushreff* or accountant. A Broker, a Treasurer, a Weighman, a Melter and a Plate-maker were also attached to each mint.

15. The silver rupee weighed $11\frac{1}{4}$ *mashas*¹. The *dam*² was a copper coin, which weighed one *tola*, eight *masha* and seven *ruttee* and was, in value, equal to the fortieth part of a rupee. According to Dr. W. W. Webb, "The Silver Coins (of Bikaner) are well-struck and are among the best in Rajputana."³

16. It is recorded that in the minting operations, in ancient times, no base metal was alloyed with silver.

THE CUSTOMS DUTIES.

17. The levy of Customs Duty on import and export of commodities entering the territories of the State, either for local consumption or for re-export—

¹ Both *nazar* and ordinary rupees were minted in Bikaner State, the *nazar* coins being specially fine.

² The *dam* was sub-divided into twenty-five parts, each of which was called a *jetal*. The *jetal* was not minted, but was disbursed, when necessary, in *cowries*.

³ Cf. "Currencies of the Hindu States of Rajputana", by Dr. W. W. Webb, M.B., 1893.

in original, converted or manufactured from—has, from time immemorial, been recognized as another important attribute of Sovereignty. The State of Bikaner has possessed and exercised this right from the beginning of its establishment and has through ages levied such duties.

18. We may easily assume that such duties formed an important item of receipts in the State budget during the reign of Rai Singhji, even as they do now. The territories in the province of Sorath (Kathiawar) alone yielded, on an average, about Rs. 1,20,000 per year by way of sea-customs duties.

19. It may be added that the right of imposing customs duties is not enjoyed by all the States of India. Mysore and Patiala, for instance, are two of the big and important Indian States that do not enjoy this privilege. In the case of Bikaner, however, there has never been any question of this right not being possessed and exercised.

PRICE-LEVEL OF STAPLE PRODUCTS.

20. In the reign of Akbar, the Empire of India was divided into 12, and subsequently into 15, *subas*. The territories of Rajputana were included in the *suba* of Ajmer, which consisted of 7 divisions (known as *sarkars*), of which Bikaner State was one.

21. Intelligent people were set by the Govern-

ment of the Emperor,¹ from time to time, to record the prices current in various parts of the Empire. After a careful enquiry into the values of various articles over a period of 19 years, the following average prices-current for the *pargana* of Nagore, which then formed part of the Bikaner State and the rates of which may be regarded as constituting a standard level of prices in the surrounding territory, including the city of Bikaner, are recorded in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

Spring Harvest.	Rate per maund. ¹				Autumn Harvest.	Rate per maund. ¹			
		Rs.	A.	P.			Rs.	A.	P.
Wheat	...	2	8	0	Sugarcane	...	2	14	0
Barley	...	1	10	0	Common rice	...	1	12	0
Fodder	...	1	6	0	Mash (urad)	...	0	12	0
Poppy	...	2	14	0	Cotton ...	...	1	11	0
Green local vegetables	...	1	9	0	Green local vegetables	...	1	9	0
Linseed	...	0	12	0	Moth ...	...	0	8	0
Mustard seed	...	1	6	0	Indigo ...	...	3	6	0
Onions	...	1	11	0	Hinna ...	...	1	10	0
Water-melons	...	0	3	0	Lobia ...	...	0	9	0
Ajwain	...	2	3	0	Jowar ...	...	0	12	0
Arzan (gram)	...	1	12	0	Gal ...	...	1	0	
								10	

¹ The prices in the *Ain* are are equivalent to one *dam* and 40 .

22. The prices current for other provisions are not given separately, province by province, in the *Ain*. The following rates were, however, prevalent at Agra at that time.

<u>Names of the Commodities.</u>			<u>Price per unit.</u>		
			Rs.	A.	P.
<i>Sheep.</i>					
1st kind ...	...	...	2	0	0 each.
2nd kind ...	...	...	1	8	0 each.
3rd kind ...	....	...	1	0	0 each.
<i>Goats.</i>					
1st kind ...	...	...	1	0	0 each.
2nd kind ...	...	...	0	12	0 each.
<i>Meat.</i>					
Sheep mutton ...	...	...	1	10	0 per maund.
Goat mutton ...	...	...	1	5	0 per maund.
Ducks ...	...	...	1	0	0 each.
Geese ...	...	...	0	8	0 each.
Cranes ...	...	...	0	8	0 each.
Patridges ...	...	...	0	8	0 each.
Lava ...	...	...	0	0	3 each.
Quails ...	...	...	0	1	0 each.
Doves ...	...	...	0	1	9 each.

Names of the
Commodities.

Price per
unit.

Rs. A. P.
Spices.

Saffron ...	...	...	10	0	0	per seer.
Cloves ...	...	...	1	8	0	per seer.
Cardamums ...	...	...	1	5	0	per seer.
Black pepper ...	...	...	0	7	0	per seer.
Red chillies ...	...	...	0	6	6	per seer.
Dry ginger ...	...	...	0	2	0	per seer.
Green ginger ...	...	...	0	1	0	per seer.
Turmeric ...	...	...	0	1	0	per seer.
Coriander seed ...	...	...	0	1	6	per seer.
Aniseed ...	...	...	1	0	0	per maund.
Cinnamon ...	...	...	40	0	0	per maund.
Salt ...	...	...	0	6	6	per maund.
Asafoetida ...	...	...	10	0	0	per maund.
Cocoa-nuts ...	...	...	4	0	0	per maund.

Other Articles.

Ghee ...	...	...	2	10	0	per maund.
Milk ...	...	...	0	10	0	per maund.
Milk-curd ...	...	...	0	10	0	per maund.
Sugar (white refined) ...	...	...	3	3	0	per maund.
Gur ...	...	...	1	10	0	per maund.

Fruits.¹

Pomegranates ...	...	...	6	8	0	to Rs. 15 per maund.
Dates ...	...	...	10	0	0	per maund.

¹ The prices for fruits represent average rates current in the season in which each kind of fruit is harvested.

<u>Names of the Commodities.</u>			<u>Price per unit.</u>		
<i>Fruits.</i> ¹ —Contd.			Rs.	A.	P.
Sweet grapes	...	...	2	11	6 per maund.
Raisins	...	...	9	0	0 per maund.
Almonds in shell	...	...	11	0	0 per maund.
Almonds (shelled)	...	...	28	0	0 per maund.
Pine apples	...	...	0	2	0 each.
Plantains	...	...	0	0	3 each.
Khirney	...	...	4	0	0 per maund.
Mulberry	...	...	2	0	0 per maund.
Walnuts	...	...	2	8	0 per maund.
Apples	...	...	7	to	15 per rupee.
Pears	...	...	10	to	100 per rupee.
Pista (shelled)	...	...	9	0	0 per maund.
Unshelled pista	...	...	6	0	0 per maund.
Khajoor	...	...	4	0	0 per maund.
Lehsorah	...	...	1	0	0 per maund.
Chiraunji	...	...	4	0	0 per maund.
Supari (betel nut)	...	...	8	0	0 per maund.
Oranges	...	...	1	4	0 per hundred.
Lemons	...	...	0	10	0 per hundred
Galgol	...	...	1	4	0 per hundred
Aonla	...	...	2	0	0 per maund.

THE INDUSTRIES.

23. The territories of Bikaner have ever been famous for the production and supply of the finest wool in India. The different varieties of sweet-

¹The prices for fruits represent average rates current in the season in which each kind of fruit is harvested.

grasses, with which the desert lands of the State are covered in abundance, in and after the monsoons, possess special ingredients which, when eaten by sheep, help in the growth of long-stapled white wool on their skins.

24. In the reign of Rai Singhji, too, Bikaner was famous for its wool and woollen cloth. Nagori and Bikaneri woollen shawls were renowned for their soft fibre and the silken feel, and fetched from Rs. 2 to Rs. 15 per piece.

25. Shawls were woven generally white in colour, but they were sometimes dyed black and grey.¹ They were incomparable for their lightness, warmth and softness, and were made thick, medium or light, to suit the various climatic conditions of the year.²

26. Col. Tod, in his 'Annals of Bikaner', bears testimony to the antiquity of the woollen industry in Bikaner and to the superior quality of the local shawls, which "are without any nap", and

¹ It is stated in the *Ain* that "it is surprising that they will not take a red colour". From this confession it is inferred that the knowledge of red dyes at the time was imperfect.

² It is recorded that there were numerous factories for the weaving of shawls in the country. Upwards of 1,000 factories were found in Lahore alone. Lahore, it may be added, was the chief mart for the sale of Bikaner wool in those days.

were of a soft and silky feel, 'suitable as "scarfs for the ladies"', being of very fine texture.

27. The manufacture of blankets is the oldest industry of Bikaner: and, in all probability, in the reign of Rai Singhji, it was in just as prosperous and flourishing a condition as it is now.

28. Manufactories for making sword-blades, match locks, daggers and iron-lances existed in Bikaner of old. The industry in sword-handles which were often inlaid with variegated steel had reached a high state of proficiency and the products were in great demand for local use, and also for export to the various parts of India.

29. Bikaner possessed expert artists for making ivory articles, inlaid or burnished. Ivory bracelets (or *churies*) were particularly famous. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving were popular cottage industries. Coarse cotton cloth was produced in sufficient quantities to meet the internal consumption.

MINERAL PRODUCTS.

30. The copper mines of Dariba, near Bidasar, are very old. Most probably they were worked even before Rao Bikaji set his foot on the soil of Bikaner. They were being operated in the reign of Rai Singhji, but have since been abandoned.

31. The salt lake of Chhapar, in Sujangarh district, was the principal source for the supply of salt to the people of Bikaner. It was about two miles wide by six miles long.¹

32. The stone quarries of Khari (now known as, Dulmera) were then, as now, humming with activity on account of the excellent stone found there. The Multani Mitti (Fuller's Earth), as its very name implies, possessed good market for its sale in Multan, Lahore and Sirsa. The Kankar and Limestone deposits were also worked to supply the needs of the State.

THE SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

33. Much information is not available with regard to the social customs prevalent in the reign of Rai Singhji, but it appears that the popular age for marriage of boys was over 16 years. The girls were not generally married under 14. The evil effect of early co-habitation on the progeny was even then fully realised.

34. The custom of *sati* appears to have been prevalent not only in the Royal family, but also among some sections of the public.

35. Literacy, from all accounts, was very poor. Even the 3 r's were generally the monopoly of

¹ It is believed that there was also another salt lake, about 40 miles to the north-east of the city of Bikaner.

11. 1583-4 Suppression of⁶ rebellion in Bengal.
12. 1585 Baluchistan War.
13. 1591-2 Conquest of Sindh.
14. 1593 Deccan War.
15. 1600 Expedition to Nasik.
16. 1602 Settlement of Gwalior
17. 1603 Udaipur expedition.

Internal Wars & Expeditions :

18. 1574 Subjugation of the Johiyas.
 19. 1575 Annihilation of Jats.
 20. 1578 Conquest of Bhatner.
 21. 1601 Re-conquest of Bhatner.
 22. 1611 Expedition against Dalpat Singhji and re-conquest of Nagore.
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